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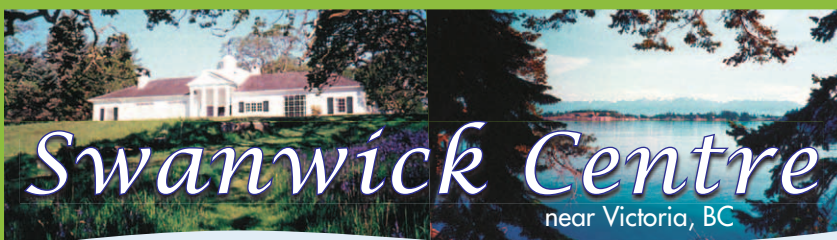


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Sex, drugs and a rockin' beat

Big Pharma's marketing machine

Since we're now welcoming new readers in Ontario, I thought I'd tap into a topic that is sexy (not to mention timely and urgent), relates to drugs (the pharmaceutical kind) and has the unmistakable rockin' beat of the pharmaceutical industry's marketing machine. So, in this column, I'm trying to hit all the bases: sex, drugs and rock'n'roll.

Anyone who has had an encounter with the health-care system lately, in any way that involves pain, will likely have heard of tramadol, sold under a variety of names including Tramacet, Ralivia, Tridural, and Zytram XL (Ultram or Ultracet in the US). It is a "centrally-acting, narcotic-like analgesic" prescribed for moderate to severe pain. There is one important difference between this narcotic and other weapons-grade opioid painkillers such as Dilaudid, Percocet or Oxycodone: it is how it is classified.

Strong opioids are considered "controlled substances" and closely monitored because of the potential for abuse and the toxicity of the drugs. Canadian prescribers of narcotics are required to fill out duplicate or triplicate prescription forms, counsel and monitor patients and only authorize a limited supply. Their prescribing behaviour is enforced by provincial Colleges of Physi-

cians who are known to spank physicians they think are too exuberant in prescribing narcotics.

In Canada, Tramadol is a marketer's dream – an "uncontrolled" drug that doctors anywhere can prescribe without paperwork hassles or Big Brother peering over their prescription pad. Only in New Brunswick and Ontario is it classified as a 'monitored' drug, yet because it's still easy to prescribe, it's the drug of choice for many physicians.

According to BC prescribing data there are about 127,000 patients who got a tramadol script last year (extrapolated that would mean about 375,000 people in Ontario) yet its use is growing more at a rate of more than 10% per year. In 2012, in the US tramadol was the 21st most dispensed drug that year.

Must be because it's such an effective drug, right?

Wrong. While tramadol can be effective for pain, it is no more effective than other opioids. Plus, it comes with a hockey sock of other problems, including the risks of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), serotonin syndrome and many potential dangerous interactions with other drugs. Independent experts have said it is actually a worse choice over other narcotics and many public drug plans in Canada refuse to cover it.

This, however, hasn't prevented tramadol from being widely prescribed, because, well, it's just so convenient to use and has this illusion of safety because it's "uncontrolled."

This situation clearly infuriates Dr. David Juurlink, a physician, pharmacologist and toxicologist in Toronto. He doesn't waste words: "Tramadol," he says, "bothers me a lot."

He knows this drug intimately so I tracked him down for an interview as he was navigating airports, enroute to Boston. Juurlink often gets asked to sit on committees evaluating the benefits and harms of prescription drugs, mostly because he's one of those rare physicians with a geek-level insight into the action of a drug. He easily emits a dizzying academic monologue about receptors, enzymes and metabolic processes that explains where, exactly, the chemicals go and what they do once you swallow them.

He tells me the main issue is that when tramadol is ingested, for more than 90% of people, it is metabolized to an opioid, essentially becoming no different than the other opioids on the market. Juurlink reckons that other considerations, including the pharmaceutical industry lobby and funded patient groups, likely influenced Health Canada in classifying it the way it did back in

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2007. Tramadol is a controlled substance in the UK and, since 2014 in the US, yet in Canada, Juurlink says, its lack of designation means that, for prescribers, the “normal antenna doesn’t go up and they don’t see tramadol for what it is.”

Doctors are taught to be wary of opioids. They know the lengthy list of dangers related to narcotics: abuse, addiction, toxicity and death. Tramadol is probably best compared to codeine, a powerful narcotic, and Juurlink reckons it should be treated like one. Some people may be more susceptible to the effects of tramadol and it can adversely interact with many other drugs, including SSRI antidepressants, which can lead to serotonin toxicity or serotonin syndrome.

A particular drug company that made pain medications was also slipping their own material into the medical school curriculum.

Johanna Trimble in Vancouver has seen serotonin toxicity up close and personal. She became an autodidact on the subject of medicines in the elderly and over-prescribing (known as “polypharmacy”) when she was trying to figure out why her elderly mother-in-law, Fervid, went from a normal functioning 87-year-old to a near-zombie. (Read her story at www.isyourmomondrugs.org) The doctors wanted to prescribe drugs for dementia, but Johanna did some sleuthing and found she likely wasn’t demented at all – her symptoms started too

suddenly after a change to her medications. Fervid was actually suffering from serotonin syndrome due to the interaction between tramadol and a new script for citalopram (an SSRI anti-depressant). Once taken off these drugs, she returned to normal.

Serotonin toxicity, which can result by mixing antidepressants with tramadol, can lead to hospitalization and sometimes death. This can happen accidentally as people in pain are often also depressed or anxious and end up taking a painkiller/antidepressant combination. One Australian study looking at nearly 300,000 elderly veterans found that about eight percent were prescribed two or more serotonergic drugs at the same time and about one percent were prescribed a potentially fatal combination with another drug like tramadol.

Another worrisome problem with tramadol is that many patients can suffer from hypoglycemia, which is unrecognized by physicians who would blame the low blood sugar on diabetes. Diabetics prescribed hypoglycemic drugs (to lower blood sugar) may also take tramadol and that can make things infinitely worse. Juurlink has written that, “If we replace conventional opioids with tramadol, as some guidelines have suggested, we may be left with more unintended consequences of the opioid epidemic to worry about.”

One wonders about the role of the drug companies, which clearly employ professional lobbyists and their own stable of pain experts to meet with Health Canada, provincial politicians and other drug plan decision-makers to explain their new miracle pills. Often, company-sponsored pain ‘experts’ are involved in deliver-

ing physician education, which can include a hefty load of the company’s pain pill propaganda.

This issue was brought into focus a few years ago in an article in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* by Dr. Nav Persaud. While in medical school at the University of Toronto, he discovered that a particular drug company that made pain medications was also slipping their own material into the medical school curriculum. Specifically, pharmacotherapy lectures contained questionable content about the use of opioids for pain management, leaving these medical students with a misleading view of the dangers associated with opioids. Since these conflicts of interest were not always disclosed, the medical students ended up dancing to the beat laid down by the drug industry’s spin machine. It’s clearly time to change that track.

Dr. Persaud concluded we desperately need better strategies to keep drug industry propaganda out of medical schools; he later told the *Globe and Mail*, “Doctors should not teach medical students and work for pharmaceutical companies at the same time... When you go to the doctor, you want to know that you’re getting the advice that’s best for you and not something that’s based on the marketing plan of a pharmaceutical company.”

Something to think about next time you’re in pain and your doctor wants to hand you a script for tramadol. 

Alan Cassels is a pharmaceutical policy researcher and journalist. If you’re interested in ‘deprescribing,’ check out Medstopper.com and watch the video that features the Beatles singing about how to reduce medications. @AKECassels



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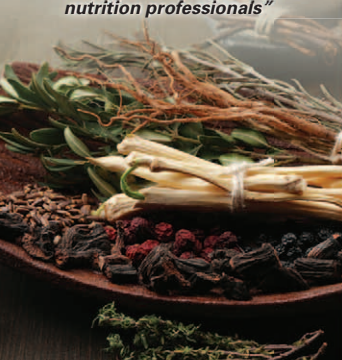
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GO VOTE – JUST DO IT

We're at a turning point... We can be game-changers," says Brigitte DePape. Last month, we featured Brigitte on our cover with her 'Stop Harper' sign from 2011. That same year, two-thirds of young Canadians didn't vote in the federal election; 1.8 million eligible youth didn't show up, along with 40% of all voters, granting the Harper government a majority with just over 6,000 votes in key ridings – and less than 40% of the total votes cast. This month, she's back with, "Go Vote." "What is in our control," she says, "is whether or not we vote and whether or not we encourage those around us to do the same. There's a lot of power in that... Voting is a small investment of time that's a source of power on issues that matter: whether or not we go to war, take action on climate change, have good healthcare, act on youth unemployment, student debt, indigenous rights, the growing refugee crisis and much more."

October 19, 2015, will be an historic, pivotal date in Canada's history. Be part of it and the call for change that is sweeping your country and determining your future. Encourage everyone you know to cast their all-important ballot. Go Vote. Just do it.

Leadnow

Vote Together campaign aims to defeat Harper's Conservatives

by Bruce Mason

If we wake up to a new government on October 20, the vast majority of Canadians will have defeated Stephen Harper at his own strategy game. Nursing a hangover from the longest, costliest and arguably the most significant campaign in our history, many will be vowing “never again” as they clean up the ‘party’s over’ mess of our last ‘first past the post’ election. We will all be able to take part in a more healthy democracy and political life. Thanks, in some measure, to “communities” like Leadnow.

At press time, a half million folks were involved in the independent advocacy organization. Tens of thousands had signed Vote Together pledges. And thousands more had engaged and shared in direct participatory decisions, door-knocking, leafleting, phoning and voting. And – get used to it – they aren’t going away.

Conservatives stacked the deck by passing the absurdly named Fair Elections Act, with US-style voter suppression laws, spending millions of taxpayer dollars on partisan ads and building a massive elections war chest to outspend the other parties.

Leadnow’s elections campaign manager Amara Possian told *Common Ground*, “What we are accomplishing is unprecedented, a game-changer. Excitement and momentum are rapidly growing in an incredible response across the country. Canadians are making this happen because they know we need to work together and work harder than ever to encourage others to join us.”

In less than five years, a small youth-led team gathered together before the 2011 election to grow exponentially. They wanted to do their part in helping to halt the existential threat of runaway climate change and build a fair economy to reverse the obscene trend of growing inequality. Campaigns have been conducted on everything from omnibus crime and budget bills to the Canada-China FIPPA investors deal, fast-tracked pipelines and tankers, the CBC takeover, senate expense scandals, robocalls and runaway rail cars in Lac-Mégantic.

“We poll our community to ask them what type of campaign we should run and again and again we heard from people who were excited about connecting with others and a national action plan that focused on work-

ing across party lines,” Possian explained. “Consistently, the number one concern was defeating the Conservatives. We can’t make any progress with this government. Canadians were tired of our broken, distorted democracy in which a majority of voters can vote for change and still see Stephen Harper win 100% of the power with thirty-something percent of the vote.”

Meanwhile, Conservatives stacked the deck by passing the absurdly named Fair Elections Act, with US-style voter suppression laws, spending millions of taxpayer dollars on partisan ads and building a massive elections war chest to outspend the other parties.

Knowing that the outcome of the election would come down to some 70 swing ridings, dozens of groups formed and fought to “knock off” Conservatives. Groups include public and private-sector unions, an anything-but-Conservative veterans group, the Council of Canadians and Dogwood Initiative, the small-government National Citizens Coalition, environmentalists, the Canadian Medical Association, First Nations groups, the international lobby group Avaaz and others ranging from “Voters Against Harper” to ShitHarperDid. Their varied goals included improving seniors’ care, restoring door-to-door mail delivery as well as electoral reform and strategic voting. Some urged voters to cast ballots for specific parties, most notably the NDP.

Leadnow built VoteTogether, uniting centre-left voters around one candidate in selected ridings. They shared information about positions on the economy, environment and democratic reform, as well as data on who had the best hope of winning, based on results from 2006, 2008 and 2011.

The independent and nonpartisan group crowd-funded to pay for detailed, expensive, riding-specific polling so voters in 13 key constituencies could pick the “best” local candidate to win seats. Rather than tell pledgers whom to vote for, Leadnow not only provided information required for victory, but they also vowed to make MPs accountable and to press hard for ongoing issues, front and centre in the media. Moving beyond ‘shallow’ mass Internet engagement, the goal was to catalyze voters into voting for the more responsive and accountable politician.

Leadnow currently has a small, dedicated staff team, including field organizers, and a powerful, fast-growing network and army of volunteers, which includes students, previously marginalized people and First Nations, along with advisers who support their work. It also has a member-driven legacy – a profound transformation of Canada’s political landscape, through sophisticated engagement and

innovation, with people on the ground and a coherent strategy and clear goals.

Anyone in the Leadnow community can start a campaign. There are a few common sense guidelines (campaigns can’t be offensive, discriminatory, inaccurate or illegal) but members can start a petition on anything they want, big or small, local or national and take action immediately with access to tips and tools to increase exposure and growth.

As an example, the free, self-paced online program, Skills for Solidarity, opens up the long-overdue conversation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples about their shared history and building a new reality, through personal stories, myth busting and more.

Leadnow offers a practical, effective leadership program to inform and inspire a new generation to work respectively around fear and conflict and forge lasting friendships. Before, during and after the election, you can glimpse Canada’s future going forward and people powered change at www.leadnow.ca 

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola Island-based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of *Our Clinic*. brucemason@shaw.ca

Voting together to end 10 years of Harper rule

While a growing majority of people want change in this election, Harper could win again because our broken “first-past-the-post” voting system splits votes and distorts our democracy. In the last federal election, a majority of people voted for a change in government, but the Conservatives got 100% of the power in Parliament with just 39% of the vote. Leadnow’s Vote Together campaign connects the millions of people who want change on October 19 with the information and tools they need to defeat the Harper Conservatives.

This election, we can defeat the Harper Conservatives by uniting people in swing ridings where a few thousand votes will be all that’s standing in the way of another Harper majority. Find your riding at www.votetogether.ca



Parent trouble

Generally, when we talk about trouble with parents, it is in the context of a teen/parent relationship. Increasingly, I see more and more adult clients who experience ongoing stress and anxiety because of the behaviour of one or both of their parents. In my experience, it is most often women having issues with their mothers.

Most often, this is an issue of boundaries. The parent treats the adult child as though he or she were still a child. They may be critical of how their child is raising their grandchildren, how the couple spends their money or demanding of more time with their children.

Some mothers are experts at laying guilt trips. A role reversal happens when the parent expects the adult child to meet their needs. It is one thing if there has been a history of good, mutually respectful relations between the parent and child. If the relationship has been positive over the years, the child *wants* to be there for the parent.

As people age they can become insecure and dependent. However, in some cases, the adult child has a history of the mother being emotionally abusive, judgmental, unloving and unsupportive. When the adult child reaches her forties, she is dealing with her teen children, which can be challenging; at the same time, she is the “child” being chastised by her mother. Often, the adult child will reach a point where she has had enough. She is torn between a sense of obligation and a desire to avoid the toxicity of the parent.

Sometimes, they ask me if it is okay to reduce or cease contact with the parent. I respond by saying that having our adult children be a part of our lives needs to be earned. If the parent is someone the adult child would never associate with, if not for the biological connection, and the abuse is ongoing, it is okay to protect oneself.

Often, it is impossible for the adult child to have a healthy discussion with her mother who may still feel she is in charge and that her child should defer to her. She may take

things personally, be defensive or in attack mode or focus on the fact she is hurt by what her child is saying, rather than really listening and honouring her concerns.

Part of the learning in all of this is for the adult child to begin to set her own boundaries. It is okay to tell a parent she cannot talk to you in a certain way. If she berates you in phone calls, it is fair to say you are going to hang up and, when she is ready to be respectful, she can call you back.

It is okay to tell a parent she cannot talk to you in a certain way. If she berates you in phone calls, it is fair to say you are going to hang up.

We can stand up for ourselves without getting into conflict or attacking the other. It is a little like dealing with a child’s bad behaviour. Attacking the child only escalates the problem. By calmly setting boundaries – telling the child if the behaviour continues there will be a time out or she will lose her technology privileges – the child can choose to moderate her behaviour.

If the parent of the adult child is told that criticism, guilt trips and expressions of anger will no longer be tolerated, she learns that if she wants to be around her adult children, she has to be respectful. If you are at her house, you can cut the visit short and tell her why you are leaving.

It can be hard to set these boundaries, but it will be healthier for all. ◀

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, “Deep Powerful Change” hypnosis CDs and “Creating Effective Relationships” series, visit www.gwen.ca

Imagining the October 20th headline:

Young people vote in record numbers, end 9 years of Conservative rule

by Brigette DePape

October 20th is just around the corner. Imagine that day – the one after the election. Imagine that we have done everything in our power to change our country.

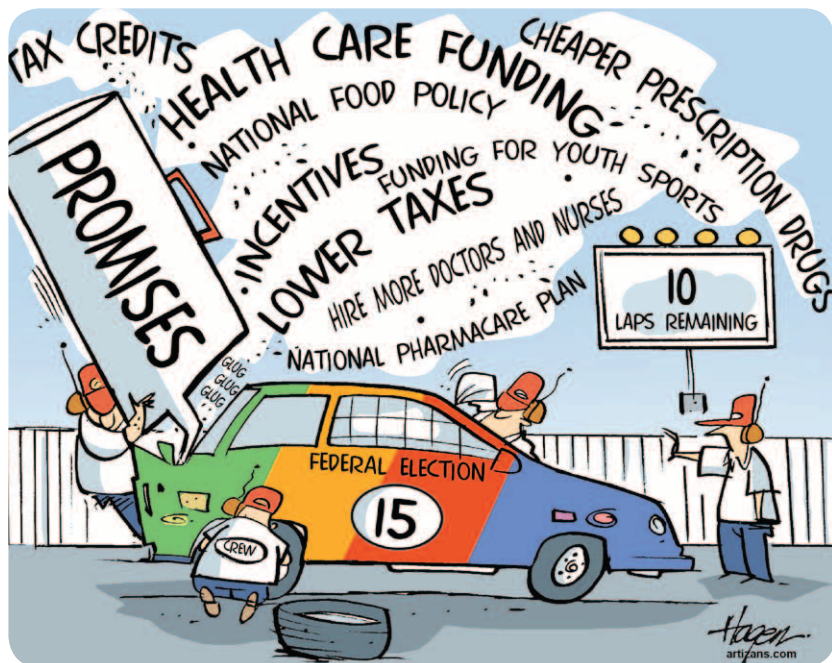
3 reasons why young people should vote.

- Because our generation wants a change. Over 80% of young people in Canada believe a change in government would be a good idea. If more young people vote in this election, our generation can be game-changers.
- Because Harper doesn’t want us to. With the so-called Fair Elections Act, he is making it harder for students to vote. The act takes away the ability for people to use voter information cards to prove their address, which tens of thousands of people used in the last election.
- Because the current government is failing us on the issues we care about. Recent surveys show that the top issues for young people are health care, job creation, taxes, education and training, and the environment. As you can see in our Youth Voter’s Guide, the current government is failing us on these issues, whether it’s cuts to health care or youth

employment programs. It’s also failing us on the moral crises of our time, refusing to launch an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and closing our doors to Syrian refugees rather than opening them.

3 reasons why young people did not vote in the last election, but will vote in this election.

- Because we were busy. The most common reason why young people did not vote in the last election is that they were busy, whether with school, work or taking care of children. In the long run, I think we should be considering structural changes like elections on the weekend, as is done in so many other countries. But I’m hopeful youth will vote this time around if we are able to spread the word about different options for voting. You can vote now at any one of 400 Elections Canada offices. Campus polling stations, which will be on 40 campuses across the country, start on October 5. Advance polling runs from October 9 to 12.
- Because we were away from our ridings. In addition to all the options above, you can vote by mail, but you need to do so in advance. So do *continued next page...*



this early!

- Because we didn't feel informed enough. Check out our Youth Voter's Guide to see where the parties stand on different issues.

There are reasons to be afraid. It is an extremely tight race. There is the very real possibility that there will be another Conservative government. But there is also the very real possibility that we will see a change.

There are more reasons to hope. I get hope from meeting people, young people who did not vote in the last election but will be voting for change in this one. Young people who voted in the last election, and this time are committing to bring at least one friend who did not vote. I get hope from the students who are collecting vote pledges on their campuses, or young workers in their workplaces.

Incredible organizing efforts are happening across the country: the ImagineOct 20 concerts; Mrs.Universe Ashley Callingbull calling for voting to defeat Harper; the record number of groups organizing to get out the vote; our national day of action to get out the youth vote on October 5th; and grass-roots initiatives to get out the youth vote, like #votingbuddies, where people take selfies and post online to encourage voting with friends. It's clear that people care and are taking action.

Together, let's make this change we want happen. Visit www.canadians.org/iwillvote to pledge to vote, and encourage your friends to do the same. Let's be the game-changers nobody saw coming. 📌

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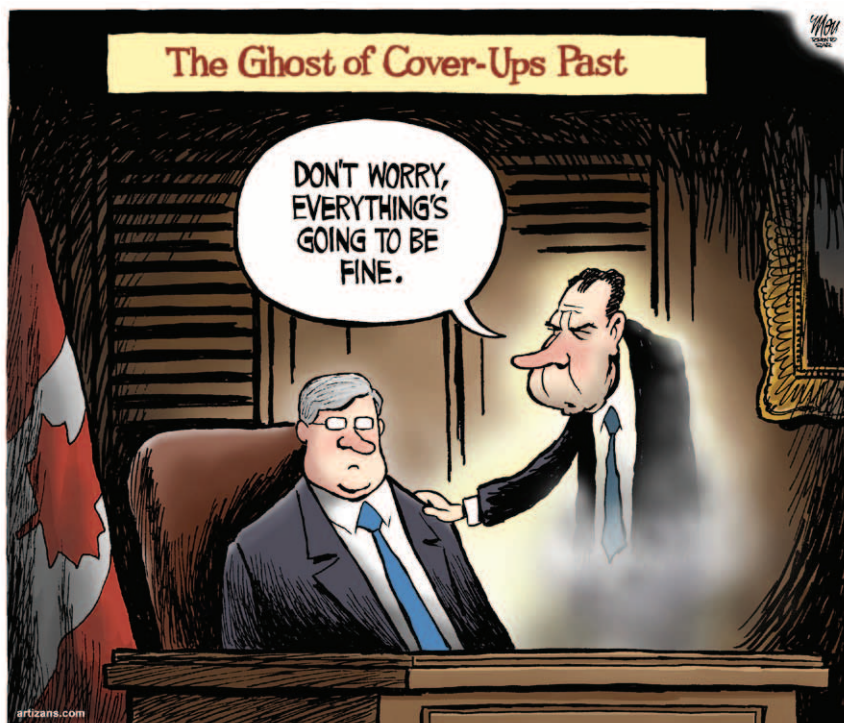


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LETTERS

Strategic voting is essential

The Conservatives may be a disaster at governing a nation, but they are experts at manipulating electoral wins. In the last two elections, they improved their position by six percent in the weeks just before the elections.

The Conservatives are noted for their propaganda and negative advertising. The corporate media will explain the wisdom of “staying the course.” And now the Conservatives have recruited the highly successful spin-doctor from Australia, Lynton Crosby, also known as the Wizard of Oz or the Lizard of Oz. In Australia, he is sometimes called the “attack dingo” and in Britain, a “political Rottweiler.” His favourite phrase is “below the radar,” meaning sneaky.

Strategic voting can defeat almost any Conservative candidate in Canada.

So we better brace ourselves for a struggle. He was behind four successive conservative wins in Australia and also behind the majority win of David Cameron in the recent British election. The polls, at the time of writing [mid-September], show Canadians to be in a vulnerable position: the NDP are at 32%, Conservatives 30%, Liberals 30%, Greens 5% and Bloc Quebecois 3%. If the Conservatives make their usual 6% increase (with Lynton Crosby’s help), they will end up with 36% – knocking the NDP down to 29% and the Liberals down to 28%.

This situation is a threat, but only if we lose sight of the real battle. The critical struggle is between the vast majority of progressive Canadians (70%) and the corporate controlled Conservatives (30%). It is the struggle of the combined forces of Liberals, NDP and Greens to regain a caring society. But we must

work together for the common cause, through strategic voting.

There is terrific power through strategic voting. The Conservative may gain 6% through a propaganda campaign, but that is nothing to what Canadians can do through strategic voting. In the last election, the Conservatives had won 21 seats in BC, but are currently polling to win only seven seats. In four of these ridings, the Conservatives are leading by only 2%, 4%, 6% and 7% – and could easily be defeated by a relative handful of voters swinging their votes to the party most likely to defeat the Conservatives. There is real power by working together. Divided we fall.

Strategic voting can defeat almost any Conservative candidate in Canada. In this election, we must abandon our old habits of voting for the party we think is best. Instead, we should vote for what is best for Canada – removing the Conservatives. Does it really matter whether the Liberals win a few more seats than the NDP or vice versa? They are both essentially progressive parties and so are the Greens. They all promise to bring in “proportional voting.” They all are concerned about climate change; they all are concerned about the unfair distribution of wealth; and they all believe that peacekeeping is more important than war making. They all want the restoration of democracy. These are exceedingly important issues, but not shared by the Harper Conservatives.

Great things can happen with the removal of the Conservatives. This will happen as long as we do not split the progressive vote.

For those who feel that voting is frustrating and insignificant, be assured that every vote done strategically will actually count. Every vote goes directly to defeat the Conservatives. Just vote for the candidate most likely to defeat the Conservatives and that will make the difference.

– Doug Carrick, Hornby Island

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Vote for a better, cleaner Canada

No matter what anyone says during this long federal election campaign, climate change is the biggest threat to Canadians' health, security and economy. The scientific evidence is incontrovertible – the research wide-ranging and overwhelming.

Wastefully burning fossil fuels at such a rapid rate is jeopardizing the planet's life-support systems – harming human health, destroying landscapes and habitat, causing widespread extreme weather events and contributing less to the economy and

There are numerous election issues that can't be ignored...

Addressing climate change by shifting from the short-term prospects of the polluting fossil fuel economy to a more stable, healthy, green economy would go a long way to reducing health-care costs, creating jobs, diversifying the economy and improving our international reputation.

job-creation than clean energy development. Not only that, our rate of using and exporting these fuels means reserves will be depleted before long. In the meantime, as easily accessible sources run out, fossil fuels have become more difficult, dangerous, expensive and environmentally damaging to exploit.

Canada has a long history of extracting and exporting raw resources to fuel its economy. But that's no longer a sensible long-term plan, especially with non-renewable resources. It's incomprehensible that a country

with such a diverse, educated, innovative and caring population can't get beyond this outdated way of doing things. The recent oil price plunge illustrates the folly of putting all our eggs in one fossil fuel basket.

As world leaders prepare for the December UN climate summit in Paris, we need our government to play a responsible, constructive role. Canada has been chastised at previous summits for obstructing progress and working to water down agreements. The summit's goal is for all the world's countries to reach a legally binding pact on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions to keep global average temperatures from rising more than 2 C, the threshold beyond which experts and world leaders agree could bring catastrophic consequences.

The consequences are already severe and will get worse if we don't act. Increasing extreme weather – including heat waves, floods, droughts and storms – puts lives, agriculture and economies at risk. Subsequent conflicts over resources reduce global security and exacerbate refugee problems. Pollution from burning fossil fuels increases heart disease and respiratory illnesses, including asthma. Deep-sea drilling, oil sands mining and mountaintop removal destroy the ecosystems, habitat, wildlife and

natural capital upon which our health and survival depend.

Everyone seeking election must get serious about the climate, so no matter which party or parties form government after October 19, Canada will be part of the solution.

Continuing with business as usual will only ensure more extreme weather leading to floods and droughts; negative health impacts, including increases in premature deaths; harm to food production and security; more pipeline, rail and marine accidents; and missed opportunities to diversify the economy.

Although climate change, resource development and infrastructure have been raised in this election, the talking points don't always match the severity of the problem. It's up to all of us as voters to question candidates and inform ourselves about the various party platforms before casting ballots – and to make sure all the parties and their candidates listen and make climate change a priority.

Canada is a great country, an example to the world of how people with diverse views, backgrounds and cultures can live well together and take care of each other. We are blessed with spectacular nature, abundant clean water, fertile agricultural land, rich resources, an educated populace, vibrant democratic traditions and

strong social programs. But we can't take any of it for granted. We must protect what we have and strive to be better, to move beyond our outdated ways of thinking and acting.

There are numerous election issues that can't be ignored, including health, childcare, jobs and the economy, infrastructure, education, international trade and relations and our global responsibility to confront terrorism. Addressing climate change by shifting from the short-term prospects of the polluting fossil fuel economy to a more stable, healthy, green economy would go a long way to reducing health-care costs, creating jobs, diversifying the economy and improving our international reputation.

We have an important choice, as voters and as a country. We can heed the scientists, health-care specialists, religious leaders, politicians, international organizations, business people and citizens around the world who say we no longer have time to lose when it comes to protecting the climate and ourselves. Or we can carry on as if nothing is wrong, and live with the mounting consequences.

Exercising your democratic right as a voter is a critical step. 

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation senior editor Ian Hanington. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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Vitamin B12

Vitamins are essential to life. The "vita" in their name refers to that fact. The "amin" was added in 1912 when it was mistakenly believed all vitamins contained nitrogen compounds (amines). In the relatively young science of nutrition, all of the vitamins were discovered during the last century. As research continues to accumulate regarding optimal sources and intakes, don't be surprised by an overabundance of controversy, theories and varied recommendations.

Two vitamins that invite special attention are vitamins B12 and D. This column is devoted to vitamin B12. In next month's column, vitamin D will be spotlighted.

Roles and sources

Vitamin B12 performs dozens of functions in the body. Its two primary roles are: 1) The development and maturation of red blood cells. 2) The proper functioning of the nervous system, including formation of the myelin sheaths around nerves. Vitamin B12 is present in animal products (originating from bacterial contamination), in fortified plant foods (with B12 of bacterial origin) and in supplement form. This vitamin comes from bacteria and a few other one-celled organisms. A form of B12 can be found in meat, fish and poultry due to bacterial contamination, but B12 is not present in unfortified plant foods. Therefore, people with plant-based diets need a reliable source, specifically the forms present in supplements and fortified foods.

**It is recommended that everyone above 50 years of age
get B12 in the form of supplements or fortified foods.**

Who needs B12 supplements?

Firstly, it is recommended that everyone above 50 years of age get B12 in the form of supplements or fortified foods. With age, changes occur along the gastrointestinal tract meaning that approximately one in three people loses the capacity to absorb the protein-bound form of B12 from animal products. In contrast, the B12 in supplements and fortified foods is well absorbed by these seniors. A small proportion of people further lose absorptive capacity and need monthly vitamin B12 injections. Secondly, B12 from supplements or fortified foods is essential for everyone on a plant-based – or mainly plant-based – diet.

How much, how often, what type?

Getting enough B12 involves following *one* of the recommendations below:

- Two or three times a week, take 1000 mcg (micrograms) of vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin).
- Or take a daily supplement that provides at least 25 mcg. It may be beneficial for seniors above age 65 to take 500 mcg daily. Excess is simply excreted.
- Or take two or three servings daily of B-12 fortified foods. Examples include fortified nutritional yeast and veggie "meats," cereals and non-dairy milks that have been fortified with B12 (check labels).

This vitamin has two active forms when in the body: methylcobalamin, which is involved in the building of red blood cells and adenosylcobalamin, which is required for formation of the myelin sheaths around nerves. As it turns out, neither methylcobalamin nor adenosylcobalamin can perform both functions. You may use a combination of the two, however, little research has been done to determine requirements. Your best bet is to take cyanocobalamin, the stable form used in supplements and fortified foods. ◀

For more on vitamins – and amounts at different ages and stages – see **Becoming Vegan: Comprehensive Edition** (for health professionals and nutrition enthusiasts) and **Becoming Vegan: Express Edition**, award-winning books by Davis and Melina. For more information about **Vesanto Melina**, visit www.nutrispeak.com and www.becomingvegan.ca

Adrenal exhaustion

the 21st century disease

by Dr. Gifford-Jones

Are you tired for no reason? Having a hard time getting out of bed or feel run-down and stressed all the time? If so, you may have the first symptoms of adrenal exhaustion and must learn to “adapt” before it becomes a steady habit that causes more than heartburn. As Charles Darwin, the British scientist remarked, “It’s not the fittest that survive, nor the most intelligent, but those who can adapt to their environment.” Or, as is often said, ‘It’s not the work that kills, it’s the worry.’

The thumb-sized adrenal glands are situated on the top of both kidneys and have been called the body’s primary “shock absorbers.” They produce a number of hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol and DHEA. If you encounter a sabre-toothed tiger, adrenaline shoots up, the heartbeat quickens and you prepare for battle and survival. Today’s hectic pace also keeps our adrenal glands in high gear.



Make sure you receive adequate amounts of minerals and vitamins. For instance, stressful situations eat up vitamin C. Studies show that, under stress, animals immediately produce 10 times their normal amount of C.

Stress is the most common cause of adrenal fatigue. This can occur when a loved one dies or from overwork, physical and mental strain, chronic pain, infection, anger, sleep deprivation, chronic illness, depression and anxiety. As one wise sage remarked, “Stress is when you wake up screaming and you realize you haven’t been to sleep yet!”

Patients with adrenal fatigue may complain of cold hands and feet, low back pain, sweet cravings, headaches, arthritis and allergies. Cortisol dysfunction can also lead to low blood sugar, infertility, immune prob-



Schisandra chinensis is considered one of the most highly protective of all medicinal plants and the berry is included in many traditional herbal formulas for improving energy and mental health.

lems and heart disease.

Temporary and minor stressful situations result in slightly higher levels of adrenaline and cortisol. But day after day, stress is also associated with an increase in blood pressure and excessive levels of adrenal hormones. Finally, if there’s no relief from stress, adrenal hormones drop and adrenal exhaustion occurs. Adrenal fatigue is like withdrawing money from a bank account until there’s none left.

As adrenal hormone levels decline, apart from weakness and fatigue, digestive distress is one of the most common symptoms. Some people complain of nausea, constipation and diarrhea. There is also a tendency to weight gain, reduced sex drive and feeling better when stress is temporarily decreased, such as on a holiday.

So how do you fight adrenal fatigue? First, learn to “adapt” to stress. A good start is to separate the possible from the impossible. You can’t tell an idiotic boss to go to hell until you win the lottery. Or, as Joseph Stalin once remarked, “One has to live with the devil until one reaches the end of the bridge.”

Relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation can be helpful. So can massage, as the hands-on approach does more than just give you a good feeling. Athletes get a good rub down to get rid of the lactic and carbonic acid produced by tense muscles. It also helps to exercise, get rid of caffeine, increase the amount of raw fruits and vegetables in the diet along with whole grains and protein.

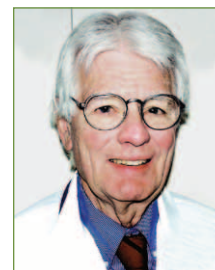
Make sure you receive adequate amounts of minerals and vitamins. For instance, stressful situations eat up vitamin C. Studies show that, under stress, animals immediately produce 10 times their normal amount of C. Humans should also increase

their intake of vitamin C to bolster their immune system. Studies also show that taking extra vitamin C pills, or Medi-C Plus, a powder that contains large amounts of C and lysine, can prevent atherosclerosis (narrowing of coronary arteries) and even reverse this process to prevent needless heart attack, the nation’s number one killer.

Another natural remedy called AdrenaSense also helps to combat adrenal fatigue. It contains a number of international root herbs whose health effects have been tested over time. For instance, Siberian ginseng has been used for years in Siberia and China and known for its adaptogenic and anti-stress properties.

Other herbs such as suma, Rhodiola, Schisandra berries and ashwagandha help to decrease depression, stimulate the nervous system, improve memory, enhance work performance, support the immune and digestive systems and have a positive effect on thyroid and adrenal function.

The dosage of AdrenaSense is one capsule, three times a day with meals and unlike many prescription drugs is safe and well tolerated. ◀



Dr. W. Gifford-Jones is a graduate of the University of Toronto and The Harvard Medical School. During his medical training, he has been a family doctor, hotel doctor and ship’s surgeon. He is a Fellow of The Royal College of Surgeons and author of seven books.

For comments, email Dr. Gifford-Jones at info@docgiff.com, www.docgiff.com

How terrorism loses and humanity wins

by Marianne Williamson



of what it means to be a civilized society in the 21st century. We need to ask deeper questions than, “What should we do?” We need to ask, “Who should we be?” And even more importantly, “Who should we be to each other?”

A rally of two million people on the streets of Paris is a beautiful show of solidarity, ultimately even more so if it becomes a template for how we live our lives each day. We need to join as brothers and sisters now, not just as a *reaction* to tragedies, but as a way of preventing tragedies. Every decent man, woman and child at that rally in Paris felt like they belonged to something, felt they were part of something, felt they were standing for something meaningful that day – and that *is* the answer. What could be a more horrific irony than that jihadists say they feel a sense of *community*? Only one thing is more powerful than a brotherhood based on hate and that is a brotherhood based on love.

Humanity needs to understand this: it won’t be enough to only express our love for each other *after* a horrific event has occurred. We are challenged to change the very bones of our civilization – to shift from

Years ago I told myself not to worry about a devil... that it’s all in my mind. Then I realized that’s the worst place it could possibly be.

I don’t think there’s an external devil stalking the planet for men’s souls, but I do believe there’s a point of consciousness in all of us – whether we call it shadow, dark side, devil, or whatever – that is not a beautiful thing. When this aspect is allowed to drive our thoughts and behaviour – whether as an individual or as a group – it isn’t just neurotic. It is beastly.

We can pretend all we want that this doesn’t exist. We can insist that reason, civilized behaviour, international law and civic institutions have the upper hand; we can be grateful for the fact that any group psychosis is *over there* somewhere and surely can’t affect our daily lives. We can believe those things, but more and more now we know they aren’t true. Today, the beast is stalking the planet and it’s way too close to the barricades.

Yet how do we fight a collective psychosis, spreading like cancer and beginning to attack the major organs of our civilization? Whether it’s ISIS in the Middle East, lone crazy people taking up the cause, foreign fighters or domestic jihadists... the question on everyone’s mind is “What do we do now?”

Americans are very good with a to-do list. Just tell us what to do and our national character is such that we can usually do it. We can liken the Nazis as well as the Japanese Imperial Army during WW2 to operable tumours that were brilliantly and surgically removed by Allied forces. But today’s terrorist threat is not an

operable tumour; it’s more like a cancer that’s already metastasized. It is wrapped around and hiding behind vital organs, constantly multiplying its hideous malformations. Invasive measures and surgical removal are not enough to handle this one. We’re going to have to boost our immune system; we need to deal with cause and not just effects and it would be a very good idea to pray for a miracle.

A holistic model of healing does not just apply to a physical body; it applies to a social body as well. Right now, our primary mode of fighting terrorism is allopathic, focused on suppressing and eradicating external symptoms. Clearly, those symptoms are deadly and the most powerful allopathic treatment is called for.

But the holistic paradigm emphasizes mind and spirit as healing modalities too. Internal powers should not be seen as the weaker stepsister of brute force. In fact, at this point, the use of brute force in fighting terrorism is doing as much to create enemies we don’t have yet as to kill the ones we do. No one knows this better than those who are applying the brute force yet we’re caught in the inescapable bind of having to apply it nevertheless. So, what are the internal powers that need to be identified? How do we harness them? What strategies best put them to use?

In seeking to answer these questions, we’re confronted by challenges more difficult than you might imagine. On an external level, our problems involve politics, police and military. On an internal level, our problems are no less difficult – not because they’re complicated, so much as because they challenge the very notion



When our leaders talk about protecting “America’s vital national interests” around the world, they’re more likely to mean protection of Halliburton, Shell, Monsanto and Exxon than protection of the 17,000 children who starve each day or the billion human beings on the planet who live on less than \$1.25 a day.

an economic to a humanitarian model – if we’re to even come close to diminishing the presence and decreasing the rise of monsters in our midst.

That is the only way we will adequately counter not just acts of terror, but, even more importantly, the radical, hate-filled philosophy that inspires them. As any expert will tell you, there is no way to track down and stop everyone who has ever been radicalized by a hateful

cleric. A dark consciousness is the root of the problem and our biggest difficulty in addressing it is our refusal to give consciousness any credence at all. That is why a purely materialist perspective is inadequate to the task of formulating an effective strategy to combat terrorism. We will not create an effective way to win this contest until we are willing to acknowledge the ground on which it's being played. And to play back on that level.

When it comes to terrorism – and when it comes to defeating it – feelings *do* matter, clerics *do* matter and philosophy *does* matter. This battle is being waged on deep subconscious levels. The force now tapping into the darkest corners of the human psyche will only be defeated from the most light-filled corners of the human heart. Terrorism is hatred turned into a political force and the only thing powerful enough to fundamentally override it is to turn love into a political force. But – that we will not be able to do until we are willing to make love more important than money and others more important than ourselves.

First, let's look at money and then let's look at us. Money runs politics in America today, which means financial interests determine the allocation of resources to everything from military to education to humanitarian expenditures. On a geo-political level, this is devastating in its effects, at home and abroad, because it leaves untended such dangerously high levels of human despair. Large groups of desperate people anywhere in the world should be considered a national security risk because desperate people are far more vulnerable to ideological capture by genuinely psychotic forces. Until America

deals with the fundamental issue of the corporate takeover of the US government, there is no reason to think that the driving force in our foreign policy will ever be a true desire for peace. When our leaders talk about protecting "America's vital national interests" around the world, they're more likely to mean protection of Halliburton, Shell, Monsanto and Exxon, than protection of the 17,000 children who starve each day or the billion human beings on the planet who live on less than \$1.25 a day. There is so much unnecessary desperation, poverty, alienation and hopelessness that the Western world has allowed to fester, and so many points of hypocrisy in our own international actions for which we owe atonement and amends. At this point, America's problem is not just that some people hate us; it's that a lot of people who don't actually hate us, don't *like* us either. Those who don't actually hate us have become more and more easy to radicalize by people who genuinely do.

Actually, though, the problem today is not radicalism but a lack of radicalism. We lack the radicalism of love. By this I mean the deliberate, intentional, spiritual, transcendent, devoted, courageous, committed, proactive love of people who have awakened to the absolute necessity – *if we are to survive as a species* – of seeing every hungry child in the world as a child we must feed; each transgression against the earth as a limiting of our grandchildren's chances to survive on the planet; every uneducated child as a security risk; and every thought or action of love as a contribution to the field of energy that alone has the power to drive the monstrous scourge of terrorism back to the nothingness from whence it came.

Some people seem more willing to die than to change their minds, and that is the question before us today: are we really willing to *die* rather than evolve beyond the obsolete, unsustainable principles that currently organize our civilization? This is the revolution now to be waged: a revolution of consciousness, as we change our thoughts and thus our behaviour and thus our institutions and thus our voting patterns and thus our government and thus find in time that we have changed ourselves.

Any conversation less radical than that simply plays into the hands of those who despise us. Terrorism is a manifestation of the accumulated moments when humanity has chosen not to love; but we still have the opportunity to choose again. We have the power to override the heinous efforts of those who terrorize, to overrule them and nullify their malevolence. First, however, we have to override our resistance to doing so. We must override our ego-based reticence about surrendering to love and making our lives its instrument. *That* is the contest, which matters the most. Are we willing to rally to that cause, not just one day in Paris, but to the best of our ability every hour of every day of every year, not only when it's easy but also when it's difficult? Any moment when we don't, is an inch of ground we cede to the terrorists. Any moment when we do, is a moment when we gain the upper hand, turn on the light that casts out darkness, and do the work of transforming- our civilization into the sustainable, beautiful, and wondrous thing it is meant to be.

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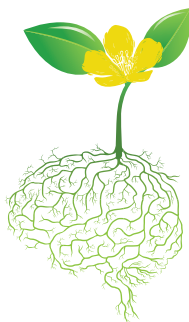


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GMO BITES

Election 2015

What is party policy on GMOs?

The federal election is October 19 and every political party will be asking for your vote. Each party has something to say about food and agriculture, but what do they have to say about the issue of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?

The Conservative Party

The Conservative Party is opposed to mandatory labelling of GM foods.

The Conservative Party opposed the 2011 Private Members Bill from an NDP MP that would have introduced an assessment of export market harm before any new GM crops are approved.

The Minister of Agriculture did not intervene to stop the legalization of genetically modified (GM) alfalfa in 2013 despite letters and protests requesting this action (but the huge controversy in the farming community has kept GM alfalfa off the market for the moment).

The Conservative party is proactively supporting the future of genetically modified crops, including by developing the new policy to accept “low level presence” (LLP) of GM contamination in imports. This policy is almost finalized and would allow a small percent (0.2% or higher) of some GM foods into Canada that have not been yet assessed for safety by Health Canada.

The New Democratic Party

The NDP has a wide-ranging food strategy called “Everybody Eats” (2014) that includes support for mandatory labelling of GM foods. The party says they would “develop clear, accurate and verifiable labelling for products that have undergone genetic modification.” In 2013, an NDP MP proposed motion M-480 for mandatory labelling.

In their food strategy, the NDP also pledges to support the organic sector (organic farming prohibits the use of GM seeds and other GM products) and to “encourage research that supports environmentally sustainable farming practices.”

The NDP also says it will “reverse

cuts to public research facilities and regional projects” and “monitor and prevent anti-competitive behaviour and monopolistic practices in the agri-business supply sector.” This would address the ever-increasing concentration in the seed sector by biotechnology and agrochemical companies.

In 2011, the NDP agriculture critic proposed Bill C-474 that would have mandated a review of potential export market harm before any new GM crops were approved, and this proposal is now part of the NDP’s food strategy. (The Conservative Party was strongly



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opposed to the bill and all Conservative MPs voted against it in its last vote. Liberals’ MPs were split, with some voting in favour, but the Liberal Party did not support the bill. The NDP voted for it as well as the one Green Party MP and the Bloc Québécois.)

The Green Party

The Green Party of Canada released their Election Platform on September 9, 2015 and it includes a budget pledge to stop federally funded GMO research. It also stresses supporting local food and small-scale producers and says, “In a time of dominance by global industrial food systems, we want to rebalance the equation by creating resilient local economies fuelled by *continued p.22...*

Daniel Bissonnette shells out

A cautionary tale about Halloween candy

Ten-year-old Daniel Bissonnette's passion for healthy food has inspired him to become a very busy activist. At the March Against Monsanto events in Vancouver this year and last, he spoke eloquently about the dangers of GMOs and junk food. And in his interview with raw food advocate David Avocado Wolfe, he talked about how kids are being deceived by the food industry. He has also been featured in numerous YouTube videos. In the transcript below from his Youtube video, Don't Eat Another Halloween Candy Before You Watch This! Daniel lets us in on the scariest part about Halloween – the candy! (Watch his other YouTube videos by searching for Daniel Bissonnette.)

What's the scariest part about Halloween? The costumes, the decorations or what if it's the very thing you never suspected – your candy?

How do you know your Halloween candy is, in fact, a treat and not a trick in disguise?

Ever wondered what it's actually made of?

When was the last time you read the ingredient list at the back of your candy or chocolate wrapper?

What did you find or *not* find on the label?

Did you count the number of ingredients? How many are there?

Are you sure every single ingredient is actually listed? What if they skipped a few? I mean, why would anyone *not* want you to know what you're eating?

Each year, Americans purchase 600 million *tons* of candy for Halloween, for a total of more than two billion dollars! On Halloween alone, the average kid consumes 3.4 pounds of candy! But what do parents and US children really know about the safety of these "treats?" Join me, detective Daniel Bissonnette, for this special Halloween report. Are you ready to strip the colourful packaging off your candy to see what's really hiding underneath? Is it a trick or a treat and what can you do to protect yourself?

You see, I've travelled to the farthest corners of the globe – or more like my local grocery store isles and computer – to unravel the great mysteries of popular Halloween candy once and for all. Turns out the top global confectionary companies including Hershey's, Nestlé, M&M/Mars and Kraft all use the following unsafe ingredients in their chocolate and non-chocolate North American formulations:

1. High fructose corn syrup (HFCS)
2. Artificial colours
3. GMOs

But exactly how dangerous are these food additives anyways? Let's have a look.

Turns out high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is the cheapest, most widely used sweetener on the planet that will make you gain weight and take your health down faster than any other sweetener. In just 10 days of eating a diet high in HFCS, it can trigger early stages of diabetes and heart disease – 10 days?! It's considered a major cause of obesity, and you know what? High-fructose corn syrup is as addictive as cocaine. How do you think Corn Candy got to be so popular? Oh, did I mention nearly all corn syrup is GMO? I'll get to that later.



**Is your Halloween candy
a treat or a trick? To
me, it sounds like a
bunch of chemicals,
drugs and genetically
altered substances
put together in happy,
colourful packaging.**

Artificial colours: OK, are you kidding me? Seriously, mom and dads, if you're going to let us eat that, don't even bother disciplining us later with "go to



your room" or "behave." It's a biochemical reaction, OK? Besides, if anyone needs discipline, it's probably you!

Did you read the studies linking food colouring consumption to hyperactivity, aggression, violent behaviour, temper tantrums, uncontrollable crying or ADD and even cancer? In the *Lancet* journal there was a study published that found food dyes to cause brain damage and even reduce IQ levels. Honestly, Smarties? I wonder how their sales would do if it they renamed it Dummies? I mean, it's made from petroleum – the stuff that's used to fuel your car and pave roads. No wonder it's banned in Europe. Yes, that's right, ask Kellogg's and Kraft foods if all their UK products are free of artificial dyes.

And then there's the Darth Vader of all ingredients: GMO's

Remember my other video about Jack and the Sun Chips? Well, if you watched it, you'd know why you must

stay away from Genetically Modified Organisms. Unless you want to end up like the rats in the *Seralini* study or turn your gut into a pesticide factory, stay away. The truth is unless it's certified organic or non-GMO-verified, likely GMO's are in *all* your Halloween candy hidden as "food-like substances in disguise" and you have no idea. GMO's, in my opinion, are by far the freakiest tricks.

So now, let me ask you, is your Halloween candy a treat or a trick? To me, it sounds like a bunch of chemicals, drugs and genetically altered substances put together in happy, colourful packaging. You know, even pharmaceuticals come with a list of side effects and why wouldn't they? They are also made with GMO's and food colouring.

But, [you say] my favourite part about Halloween is the candy. What am I going to do now? Glad you asked. You see, you might *continued p.22...*



StarWise

October 2015

LET'S TAKE A LOOK at the stars of the three wise men – oops, I mean the three politicians competing for Canada's top spot. The three wise men were astrologer/astronomer kings that knew the star of Bethlehem was a portent of the birth of a great spiritual master. Now, our three wise men seek to become king and hopefully lead and guide us along a thorny and complicated pathway for the next four years.

Let's start with the prime minister, Stephen Harper, born on April 30, 1959. He's a Taurus, slow and steady, unchangeable, habitual and very much in control. Some say he's a control freak and has everything locked down and under his thumb. Nothing moves without his nod and approval. Sounds very much like a Taurus to me. Good with numbers and knows the value of anything and everything. Like the Bull that rules Taurus, he can be pleasant and easygoing until riled, prodded or opposed. We have heard about the people that have gone against Harper only to meet their demise. Mr. Harper has the Moon in Aquarius and an Aquarius rising as well. It means he can be humanitarian and caring on the positive side, however, on the negative side, Aquarius gone wrong can evoke the harshest dictators, devoid of any care for what others may think or feel. "My way or the highway" is the hidden mantra for dear, old Taurus.

Thomas Mulcair was born on the first day of Scorpio on October 24, 1954, with the Sun conjunct with Saturn at birth. This indicates his rough and tough childhood that has no doubt shaped and instilled some very powerful values of responsibility and accountability into his soul. Like Taurus, Scorpio is a fixed sign and does not change readily or easily. Although Scorpio has true grit, great resilience and determination, they are not all that forthcoming with what is truly going on. We may be kept in the dark, as we cannot expect secretive Scorpio to spill the beans too much about what is going on. Mulcair has Mercury conjunct Saturn, another harbinger of one who may be a deep thinker and great planner, although not gushing over with a lot of information for his subjects. He has a Libra Moon, which is really great for fairness, smarts, justice and balance. Jupiter and Uranus were conjunct at his birth, a great marker of someone who may very well be willing to truly make profound changes on a humanitarian level. Many of the great revolutions in history had Jupiter and Uranus conjunctions in play.

Justin Trudeau has the Sun in Capricorn and although young in years, he may very well have a deep wisdom, something that Capricorn is known for. They are born rulers and come under the rulership of Saturn, which confers great responsibility and accountability. They take their job very seriously. Trudeau has Jupiter in Sagittarius, which bestows great vision and sometimes prophecy. He may very well see the future. His Aries Moon opposes Uranus in his birth chart indicating a willingness to go along with the will of the people. He will not be afraid to make changes when they are truly needed. Lord Saturn sits high in his chart and is another indicator he could rule for a long time. Queen Elizabeth and Prince Harry carry the same signatures in their birth horoscopes.

If we re-elect Harper, we know what we're in for, which is more of the same – same old same old. If we elect Mulcair, he may lead with a steady hand and an old-school style in which papa knows best. If Trudeau is at the helm, we may see some truly progressive changes and possibly a wild ride for a while. What do you want, Canada? Slow and steady, no changes Harper? Slow and steady with some changes and a firm hand at the helm Mulcair? Big changes and somewhat maverick and very progressive Trudeau? See you at the polls.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.

**ARIES** Mar 21 - Apr 19

The probability of changes is fairly strong around Thanksgiving Day. It's decision time and the events that come to pass may help you make some moves and changes in your life that are overdue.

**TAURUS** Apr 20 - May 21

It's that time of the year again when those late October blues set in. This year may be a bit different, though, especially at the time of the full Moon on October 27. Expect revelations to come.

**GEMINI** May 22 - Jun 20

Take the first two weeks of the month to figure out what you're going to do. No doubt, the answers will come and you will figure it out, but only after some deep soul searching.

**CANCER** Jun 21 - Jul 22

Circle October 4, 5 and 19 on your calendar as special days in which high energy takes place. You're in the midst of making long-range plans and changes. Everything's up in the air now.

**LEO** Jul 23 - Aug 22

Although intrepid and rarely hesitant, it is not always easy for Leo types to make overall changes. Now, the stars are in good position for you to do so. Time with friends and associates and sweethearts figures into the play.

**VIRGO** Aug 23 - Sep 22

It really is your time to shine. Don't spend too much time trying to figure it out. Just go for it and see what the stars decree. Timing and opportunity, along with bravery, bring rewards.

**LIBRA** Sep 23 - Oct 22

You're in your solar high of the year. It brings energy, hope and enthusiasm. It's also time to rethink the plan or make a plan and follow through with it. Correct whatever needs correcting now.

**SCORPIO** Oct 23 - Nov 21

Your solar high begins on October 24. You can come out of your dark cave now, open up and begin to socialize again. New scenarios are developing along with new circles of friends and connections.

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22 - Dec 21

Some of you will be chafing at the bit and casting about for some changes. Career objectives figure prominently and off you go on another journey of discovery. It's time to eliminate what is not worthy.

**CAPRICORN** Dec 22 - Jan 19

October 19 and 20 are the best days this month for you to see your way and to make way for the future. It's a time of churning and changing, cleansing and clearing.

**AQUARIUS** Jan 20 - Feb 19

Travel plans may be in the wind and you may be pining for matters of the higher mind. Visits from afar may take place and it may be time for you to research, learn and study.

**PISCES** Feb 20 - Mar 20

Relationships figure prominently now. Personal, professional, marital and social relations are highlighted. You may feel emboldened, ready to reach out and truly make some changes in your life. Ego clashes may occur as well. ☐

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Go on now, eat your water!

by Jeff Rubin

largest exporter of food. Instead, it would supplant America as the world's leading agricultural exporter. Alternatively, if Saudi Arabia had Canada's water, the desert kingdom could easily look like the Imperial Valley.

If one thinks about agricultural production in these terms, food is actually the embodiment of highly processed water. And if that's the case, then exporting food is really just a value-added way of exporting H₂O, in much the same way that exporting petrochemicals is a value-added way to export bitumen.

Most of us don't think of food in those terms – at least not yet – but we will when we start making full use of Canada's greatest resource.

To get there, we'll have to overcome some pretty ingrained biases. For most Canadians, the notion of bulk water exports has traditionally been viewed as something akin to the rape of the country's most treasured resource. These same folk, however, have never been opposed to selling water in the form of wheat, lentils or canola. In fact, both federal and provincial governments have set up all kinds of programs to support farm exports, not the least of which was the creation of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Let's take a closer look at wheat. It takes a whopping 1,500 litres of water to grow a kilogram of wheat on the Canadian prairies. So when you are exporting wheat, what you're really doing is exporting processed water. In this sense, at least, the country is already a major water exporter – whether Canadians recognize it or not. In 2010, the country exported 78 billion cubic metres of water in the form of agricultural produce (the water needed to grow it). Based on that figure, Canada is already the third-largest water exporter in the world.

All the right stuff in all the wrong places

It's really not at all surprising that Canada could benefit from exporting water – in either its straight-up or its value-added form. The country has a heck of a lot of the

stuff. Depending on which definition you care to use, Canada has somewhere between seven and 20 percent of the world's fresh water supply. The higher estimate refers to total fresh water resources, including the water frozen in glaciers and icefields as well as so-called fossil water in lakes and underground aquifers. The lower estimate refers to the country's far more accessible share of the world's renewable fresh water that is replenished through precipitation.

By either measure, it's a lot of water for a country of 35 million – a figure that represents only one half of one percent of the global population of seven billion. In per capita terms, it makes Canada the Saudi Arabia of fresh water. And just as Saudi Arabia is a world leader in oil consumption per capita, Canada racks up an impressive ranking when it comes to how much water each of us sucks up.



The trick with Canadian water (or any water, really) is that it doesn't always flow to where it is needed, or where it can best be put to use... A second but no less serious challenge is that Canada, with all of its water, just happens to be located on the other side of an invisible line, one that separates us from the much larger and thirstier American population to the south.

All of that water is a good thing, undoubtedly, and in a world where water can be turned into increasingly expensive food, we should be thanking our lucky stars that geography has endowed us with the natural resources we currently possess. But the story is not that simple. The trick with Canadian water (or any water, really) is that it doesn't always flow to where it is needed, or where it can best be put to use. Consider that more than half of Canada's *continued p.21...*

You might not recognize it when you're chomping on an ear of corn or tucking into a plate of pasta, but it takes an enormous amount of water to grow what is on your plate. When you're pondering the inputs that go into producing corn or wheat, it's likely that seeds, soil or even the land itself come quickly to mind; it's easy to forget the litres and litres of fresh water required. But we shouldn't forget, given that agriculture typically accounts for over 70 percent of water usage in most countries.

This overwhelming dependence on the wet stuff means that a desert country like Saudi Arabia has to buy land in places like Ethiopia or Sudan in order to grow its food supply. Back in 1985, Saudi Arabia began an irrigation program with a view to becoming self-sufficient in wheat. Turns out that when you live in a desert and you try to grow your own food, you very quickly suck your aquifers dry of whatever fossil water nature has given you. In 2014, the Saudi government wisely announced that the kingdom was abandoning wheat cultivation.

In distinct contrast to Saudi Arabia, Canada has more water than its agricultural sector can use; by some estimates, farming uses less than 10 percent of the country's total supply. Canadian food production, however, is limited by climate. If Canada had the growing season of Saudi Arabia, it wouldn't be the planet's eighth-

NATHALIE CHAMBERS

WITH ROBIN ALYS ROBERTS & SOPHIE WOODING

SAVING FARMLAND

THE FIGHT FOR REAL FOOD



As we dig into the history of Victoria's lost farmland, we see the impact both on farmers and on human health. Where we once grew blueberry bushes in healthy bogs, tomatoes on sunny hillsides or green beans alongside a salad patch waiting to be picked out of the rich, dark, naturally composted soil, thousands of customers now pluck cake mixes, instant pizzas and cereal boxes from grocery shelves.

Subsidies to industrial farmers of commodities such as corn explain why, between 1985 and 2010, the price of high-fructose corn syrup drinks dropped 24 percent (increasing the rate of type-2 diabetes in children as they consumed more), while over the same period the price of fresh fruits and vegetables rose 39 per cent. As consumers buy cheaper, bland, prepared food revved up with salt and/or sugar – or beef fed on corn and other grains – they manage to convince themselves they can save time and money, without considering the long-term costs to their well-being.

In addition to these health concerns, with both fishers and farmers going out of business, the decrease in traditional agricultural practices leaves cultures on the brink of destruction... [and] over four million Canadians are food insecure. In Toronto today, every third child goes to school hungry. As most people turn to food banks only as a last resort (in fact, fewer than 25 percent of food-insecure households make use of them), this means millions of Canadians are still truly down and out.

In the four years between 2008 and 2012, food-bank use increased by 23 percent in BC and 73 percent in the Northwest Territories, with a 30 percent average increase across Canada. In the summer of 2013, BC's Minister for Children and Family Development claimed that child poverty had declined by 41 percent over the previous decade. If that claim had been true, the province would have come down to the lowest rate in more than three decades. But at the end of the decade between 2001 and 2012, according to the non-partisan 2012 Child Poverty Report Card, which was using Statistics Canada's figures, 43 percent more individuals in BC were using food banks. BC has been crowned with the worst overall poverty rate of all Canadian provinces. Canada still remains one of the few developed countries without a national

meal program for children...

We need to redirect ourselves to a truly whole, sustainable approach, vastly increasing our awareness of how we produce food. Ideally, we should focus on sustainable agriculture... The overriding imperative is obvious: we must protect all farmland in perpetuity. For 40 years, BC protected 4.7 million hectares (11,613,953 ac) of land in the ALR, but in 2014, the provincial government planned to open a majority of that land up to mining. BC still wears the crown for food insecurity. The price of farmland and the lack of support for farmers (only one percent of our provincial budget goes toward agriculture) must be addressed.

Paying trees to keep us healthy

David Suzuki points out that, historically, we look at a temperate forest in

terms of lumber and calculate its worth simply in those dollar values. But Suzuki looks at what that forest is "worth" alive and working. He reminds us how hard a temperate forest works. It captures, filters and supplies water. It helps prevent floods. It stores carbon. It purifies air. If we had to buy those services, we'd have to pay about \$2,000 per hectare (2.5 ac) per year. Farms located alongside forests experience additional benefits, including natural preservation of soil quality and natural homes for beneficial pollinators like birds, bats, a variety of bees and other insects.

Of course, all this labour should increase the value we place on a forest. If we add in everything, including the recreational benefits a forest provides, the trees could be receiving over \$5,000 per hectare (2.5 ac) in wages every single year.

We need to treasure the biodiverse ecosystems all around us that naturally

control excesses of one species over the other, instead of killing masses of life forms for assumed economic benefits – whether we kill trees for lumber or a few "pests" at the expense of many other beneficial organisms. Trees simultaneously provide shelter, preserve moisture and build soil as leaves fall and branches rot. We see this so obviously after an ecosystem loses its pollinators, so we must remember that food security – a nation or community's access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious food – depends on biodiversity on the farm and around it.

Keeping farms affordable

The high price of farmland remains the largest obstacle to food security on Vancouver Island, across Canada and throughout many parts of the world. Expensive farmland denies farmers the ability to produce food and thus creates food insecurity. Currently, farmland located around cities is speculated at the same price as residential real estate, especially when negotiations may include the promise of a zoning change – making it enticing for speculators but completely unaffordable for young farmers. As Jeff Rubin explained in an autumn 2013 article in the *Globe and Mail*, "The price of farmland in Canada has outpaced both residential and commercial real estate, gaining an average of 12 percent over the last five years. In some hotspots, such as southwestern Ontario, the price-per-acre has been going up by as much as 50 percent a year. Even pension plans and hedge funds have become players in the pursuit of prime agricultural land, interest that is only sending prices that much higher."

The pressures to rezone are being felt across the country, not just in southwestern Ontario and BC. Investors follow the old real-estate adage, "Don't wait to buy land, buy land and wait." They can pay \$50,000 to \$100,000 per 0.4 hectares (1 ac) for farmland that has potential for alternate use close to the city of Regina. While waiting for the land to be rezoned, they derive payback income for their mortgage by leasing the land out to farmers. Their patience is rewarded when the multi-family residential zoning goes through and their land skyrockets to \$750,000 per 0.4 hectares (1 ac).

As young farmers aren't replacing older ones, the multinational corporations are moving in, for the rising crop prices,

the uncut timber and other natural resources on the land. Until we address this issue, we cannot hope to get the next generation out on the land and our chances for food security will continue to diminish.

With such farmland price speculation



Expensive farmland denies farmers the ability to produce food and thus creates food insecurity. Currently, farmland located around cities is speculated at the same price as residential real estate.

near urban centres and potential mining centres, the pressures are mounting. In addition, changes to farming practices that have occurred over the last half-century – vast swaths of monoculture devoid of supportive habitat and overwhelmed by chemical pest and weed controls – have had a deadly impact on bees and their pollination success. All these weigh heavily on the ability of young farmers to take up the mantle...

In the spring of 2012, after a 20-year

period, the number of Canadian farmers under the age of 35 had plummeted from 77,000 to just over 24,000. We have to admit that industrial agriculture, complying with free-trade policies that encourage exports at local expense and top-down corporate control that pays the local farm the least, hasn't been the solution. Paul Slomp, the youth spokesperson for the National Farmers Union, said, "Parents who are farming are telling their kids it's not worth the stress and it's not worth the debt."

So, what does the next generation of farmers look like? Despite the obstacles, Nathalie says, "Hordes of the next generation of farmers are educated. They practise sustainable agriculture: agroecology, biodynamics, permaculture and biological farming. They are eager to get their shovels in the soil. At Madrona Farm, we cannot keep up with the number of farmers who want to work here. The problem isn't finding people who want to farm. It's in getting access to farmland itself. We have a responsibility to the next generation and to ourselves to ensure that the farmland is available." ...

We can't keep tinkering with chemical sprays or chemical fertilizers that kill millions of microbes in the soil, destroy pollinators, slash the trees that offer shade, habitat and mulch, and affect the very water that we all drink. How can we remove benefactors from ecosystems and expect them to function well? Farming makes sense only when farmers champion biodiversity...

The moment we become proactive, "they" becomes "we." We understand

the suffering of those slogging it out on Bay Street, Wall Street or in the Beijing financial district. Our first and biggest obstacle is to collectively climb the mountain that is hiding what humans as a whole have lost as a result of practices like fracking and industrial farming. When a swath of big, old growth trees is slashed, we're all reduced. We need to climb our densest peak, remove our blindfolds and take a look at the full view. From side to side, top to bottom, through the rocks, down into the oceans, we must recognize that we're all connected, and no one human, no one being, is any greater than the next.

Most of all, we need to reconnect our adult selves with the innate awareness we had as children. We were born with a joyful understanding of the vast multiplicity of our connectedness. Too often, however, we gave over this joy to those who would manipulate us into dividing our world into small, separate compartments, each with different, all-controlling recipes for managing life. If we thought otherwise, or still expressed the desire to explore other areas, it seemed to be an excuse for further segregation through mockery and bullying from peers and adults, which redirected us into a culture dominated by top-down leadership...

It became dangerous to question the authorities about topics like money, religion, politics, extreme sports, wars, peace missions, intellectual pursuits, mythologies, consumerism, classism or even such basics as how agriculture can best provide us with the food we eat. As a result, many of us grew up submissive,

unquestioning, alone, obese and unhappy. None of us desire such passive isolation as adults. However, by severing our fundamental connection with the world around us, we've dug a hole in our soul.

We all need love, support and appreciation for each of our abilities and ethical intentions. If we all base our ethics on kindness and respect... we can cultivate a natural diversity that can make our hearts and bodies vibrate.

As is so often the case, people are the problem – but they're also the solution.

Excerpted from **Saving Farmland: The Fight for Real Food** by **Nathalie Chambers** with **Robin Alys Roberts** and **Sophie Wooding**. (RMB / Rocky Mountain Books, 2015)

Nathalie Chambers is the founder of the Chef Survival Challenge Inc., a fundraising event for farmland conservation, and the Big Dream Farm Fund, which directs funds towards farmland acquisition and sustainable farming education initiatives. Nathalie and her husband, David Chambers, live and work on Madrona Farm, where they grow more than a hundred varieties of produce year-round for over 4,000 regular customers, including numerous wholesalers and local restaurants.

Robin Alys Roberts taught at the University of Victoria and has written a manual, websites, newsletters, conference presentations and magazine articles. **Sophie Wooding** has a degree in creative writing and English literature from the University of Victoria. She apprenticed at Madrona Farm surrounding a stint at GoodRoots, a Community Sustained Agriculture Farm near her hometown of Langley.

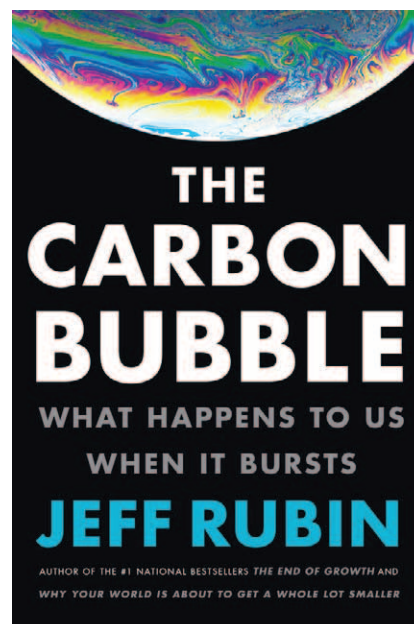
...Go on from p.19

water supply drains north, either directly into the Arctic Ocean or into Hudson Bay. The rivers of the Mackenzie basin, for example, dump over 7,000 cubic metres of fresh water into the Arctic Ocean every second – out of reach of more than 85 percent of the country's population.

A second but no less serious challenge is that Canada, with all of its water, just happens to be located on the other side of an invisible line, one that separates us from the much larger and thirstier American population to the south. Most agriculture in western Canada occurs within a 450-kilometre band north of the forty-ninth parallel. That's a pretty thin strip of a country that stretches some 4,634 kilometres from north to south. Furthermore, some of that prime agricultural land is water-stressed. Southern Alberta's South Saskatchewan River basin, for example, holds the province's most productive land and contains almost all of its two million acres under irrigation. While less than four percent of arable land in Alberta is irrigated, that

four percent produces a fifth of the province's total agricultural output...

Farmers already siphon off no less than 2.2 billion cubic metres every year from the South Saskatchewan River for irrigation, roughly 30 percent of the river's total flow. As irrigation needs grow, perhaps exponentially, more and more attention is going to be focused on water diversion. Aside from a slice of southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan that is part of the Missouri River basin, all the water flowing across the Prairies heads either to the Arctic or to Hudson Bay. It's not too hard



to figure out where the water to meet tomorrow's irrigation needs is going to come from. Moving water to booming areas of agricultural production may become as important to tomorrow's Canadian economy as moving oil is to today's.

Excerpted from **The Carbon Bubble** by **Jeff Rubin**. © 2015 Jeff Rubin. Published by Random House Canada, a division of Random House of Canada Limited, Penguin Random House Company. Reproduced by arrangement with the Publisher. All rights reserved. [Editor's note: We encourage Common Ground readers to read this very important book.]



Tell your candidates to take a stand for a free and open Internet

“It’s the economy, stupid!” That well-known political aphorism was first coined over 20 years ago by James Carville, a senior advisor to Bill Clinton.

The saying may be decades old, but it’s still applicable to our current federal election. “Who can save the economy?” blares a *Maclean’s* headline. “The economy is the most critical ballot-box issue facing Canadian voters,” intones the *Globe and Mail*, organizer of the recent leaders’ debate on – you guessed it – the economy.

Voters seem to agree. Users of CBC’s popular Vote Compass tool prioritized “the economy” far above other issues. Yet very little attention is being paid to the critical role our digital infrastructure plays in growing our wider economy. Ten years of failed

This election will shape our digital future for the coming decades. We don’t have a moment to lose.

government policies have left Canadians with a national digital deficit and a stark digital divide. And Canadians are paying the price; 44% of our lowest income households have no Internet access and over 30% don’t have a mobile phone.

Our sky-high Internet and wireless prices are a serious annoyance for middle- and high-income Canadians, but for low-income Canadians, they make Internet access literally unaffordable, sidelining millions of people from our digital future.

This government’s track record has left Canada falling behind. Their eagerly awaited Digital Canada 150 strategy, which was supposed to present a strong vision for the Internet, was a serious letdown. The strategy delayed the rollout of even 5 Mbps broadband across Canada for another four years, pushing the target to 2019, instead of 2015. Even by 2019, the government has only promised 98% coverage,

leaving 700,000 Canadians behind.

It’s clear Canadians are feeling frustrated. OpenMedia community member Nic De Groot summed it up perfectly, “Canada: providing third world Internet service at first world price since the Internet began. It is tradition.”

It’s no wonder leading innovators and entrepreneurs are speaking out and calling for real action to fix our broken telecom market. These business people are at the leading edge of Canada’s digital economy and know first-hand the economic costs of government failures. Compounding these concerns is the government’s irresponsible approach to online privacy. Scandals about the activities of Canada’s spy agency (CSE) have undermined international confidence in our digital security. And the recent passage of Bill C-51 has many Canadian business leaders – including the heads of Slack, Hootsuite, and Shopify – warning how the legislation will “change Canada’s business climate for the worse.”

We need ambition. We need investment. We need privacy safeguards. And we need Canadians’ priorities to be taken seriously. That’s why OpenMedia recently launched a crowdsourced pro-Internet action plan – see <https://ourdigitalfuture.ca/platform> – that aims to ensure, quite simply, that every Canadian has affordable access to world-class, surveillance-free Internet.

The election is on October 19 and it’s never been more important for Canadians to speak up and demand politicians listen when it comes to our digital economy. Please visit ourdigitalfuture.ca/candidates and use our tool to message your local candidates and tell them to take a stand for a free and open Internet.

This election will shape our digital future for the coming decades. We don’t have a moment to lose.

David Christopher is communications manager for OpenMedia, a community-based group that works to safeguard the possibilities of the open Internet. www.openmedia.ca

...*GMO policy* from p.16

local growers, farmers, and producers.”

Their detailed 2015 policy platform called “Vision Green” says, “Genetically engineered (GE) organisms may pose a potentially serious threat to human health and the health of natural ecosystems. Many Canadians want to follow the example of the European Union and ban GE crops. At minimum, GE products must be labelled, giving consumers the right to know and to say no to GE foods.”

The Green Party is very clear that it would “require mandatory labelling of all GM foods and food ingredients.”

The Green Party also calls for a ban on GM alfalfa and GM wheat

The Green Party calls for a ban on the GM sterile seed called “Terminator technology” (there is an international moratorium on this technology but no national ban in Canada).

The Green Party also says they would ensure developers of GM crops are liable for any damages.

The party is also committed to transitioning Canadi-



an agriculture to “100% organic farming” and says they would “shift government-supported research away from biotechnology and energy-intensive farming and towards organic food production.”

The Liberal Party

The Liberal Party of Canada has not made a statement on mandatory labelling.

The Liberal Party agriculture critic told CBAN, “The introduction of GMO crops cannot be allowed to endanger the livelihoods of other farmers and producers who have chosen a different method of growing.”

The older “National Food Policy” (2010) of the Liberal Party is only four pages and does not mention GMOs or specific issues that would impact the regulation of GM crops and foods.

In the last Parliamentary session, the past Liberal Party agriculture critic spoke out against the introduction of GM alfalfa however the Liberal leader at the time did not respond to petitions on the issue from his own constituents.

In 2001, the Liberal Party was in government but did not support Private Members Bill C-287 for mandatory labelling that came from one of its own MPs.

Source: Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, www.cban.ca

...*Shells out* from p.17

not realize this, but you can change all of that. As tempting as it might be to point fingers and blame food manufacturers and authorities for the deteriorating quality of our food, I think it’s time we took a good look at ourselves and realized this would not have been possible without the billions of dollars we’ve handed them each year.

But how could they deceive us like this? A better question would be:

What can I do to make a difference?

Here are a few suggestions:

Buy GMO-free organic treats. Not only are they way tastier and healthier, but that’s how you vote “Yes” for more real food.

Spread the message; share the video with your friends. This way, they won’t think you’re weird and make the switch to healthy snacks too.

Start a local GMO-free Halloween Challenge – because local activist are global heroes.

No matter how you look at the end of the day, you and me, the little guys shopping for treats, are the ultimate rulers.

I’m Daniel Bissonnette; have an awesome Halloween!

Steve, it's time to leave

by Michael Harris



Under the latter scenario, the phenomenon of winning all of the power with 38 percent of the vote will disappear. Another Stephen Harper will be impossible. Which is why our Marketer in Chief will wage this election like Attila the Hun armed with rocket propelled grenades. The country will be knee-deep in the blood of his adversaries by October 19. But can marketing work a fourth time for the man who thinks reality is what he says it is?

Harper certainly has the money and the media friends. In his view, no one ever lost many elections underestimating the stupidity of the people.

Just look at what Canadians have already swallowed from this Board of Trade personality with a streak of Caligula somewhere in that taciturn mix: the empty promise of transparency and accountability; Bill C-51; a feckless war in Iraq; a view of the environment which gave marine life in Prince William Sound a nice coating of oil; and some goofy imitation of trickle-down economics that didn't work for Ronald Reagan and hasn't worked for Canadians - unless you drive a Bentley.

As powerful as marketing is, like everything else, it has its limits. You can't really talk about the current Conservative Party as a ground up

operation the way the old Reform Party was. Harper has no grassroots, just AstroTurf.

Nor does he pass the Kentucky Fried chicken barrel in Calgary basements to raise money anymore. Why would he? He now has his very own Republican-style, Political Action Committee tasked with buying the election before the writ drops. The party is Harper and Harper is the party. And the record of the Harper party is catching up with this prime minister like a rubber cheque. Suddenly, the government he leads looks like the Hindenburg coming down sideways.

The PR-as-reality machine has slipped its gears. Consider the economy. Aren't we really better off with Steve, the CPC fondly asks?

Not unless you believe a recession is the fulfillment of the government's action plan. Steve of course is denying Stats Canada has it right.

As for balanced budgets, if you go one-for-seven in baseball that puts you on a bus from the bigs to the boonies. It took Harper seven years *continued p.26...*

Harper is returned, Bill C-51 will complete his journey to something so close to dictatorship that the differences will be trifling. If Thomas Mulcair or Justin Trudeau triumph, the first-past-the-post system will be dead. The election after this one will be waged under some version of proportional representation, like most enlightened jurisdictions with a continuing interest in democracy.



The country will be knee-deep in the blood of his adversaries by October 19. But can marketing work a fourth time for the man who thinks reality is what he says it is?

You can tell a lot about a person by what they believe in.

Money, art, Jesus, Bingo - a road map to the soul.

In the case of Stephen Harper, he has built his government and his career on information-control and marketing. The nerd nobody liked is getting even. Which is to say, he now edits reality full-time.

As we begin the bumpy descent towards the October election there is only one question to be answered: can Harper market his way to victory in the most important election in the country's history?

Most important, yes. All of the big elections have featured one overriding issue - reciprocity in 1911, conscription in 1917, free-trade in 1988. In Election 2015, democracy itself is on the line. The stakes don't get much higher - unless you're talking medical marijuana.

Big changes are coming no matter who wins. If

the Temple of Abstraction

by Geoff Olson



photo © Radekdrewak

In the splendid 2015 Pixar film, *Inside Out*, the characters Joy and Sadness momentarily get trapped inside Abstract Thought, a building complex inside the mind of 11-year-old Riley Anderson. The panicking pair break down into blocky Picasso-like structures, and are reduced to simple geometric forms before a narrow escape pops them back into shape.

Abstract thinking has allowed human beings to make great discoveries, amazing machines, and astounding works of imagination – including computer-generated films like *Inside Out*.

Human beings, born utterly defenceless at birth, are the ultimate generalists. What we lack in biological specialization, we make up for in scientific specialization. We have become the Earth's apex species through abstraction.

The base-10 mathematical system was abstracted from human hands, and “slipped from the fingers that described it, becoming applicable to anything... Substituting numbers for objects changed the world, for better or worse,” notes Daniel Tammet in his 2013 book, *Thinking in Numbers*.

Through observing and measuring, generations of scientists tore apart the claustrophobic heavens of medieval scholastics to reveal an unimaginably immense cosmos of great age. They discovered shape-shifting entities in the microworld – as bizarre as anything from the world of myth – and made them dance through logic gates in our consumer electronic devices.

In modern times, money is so thoroughly abstract-

ed from any real-world referents – including precious metals that theoretically back its worth – that commercial banks regularly create electronic credit through mere keystrokes. And on the world's stock exchanges, algorithms perform trades in microseconds, with valuation represented by a ghostly stream of electrons.

The word “abstract” is of Middle English origin, derived from Latin *abstractus*, literally meaning “drawn away.” It has a secondary meaning of “extract, isolate, separate, detach.” Is it any surprise that the nations of the industrialized west are now populated with abstracted, isolated workers hooked on antidepressants and electronic distractions? (Distract is a close etymological relative to abstract, from the Latin *distract* – “drawn apart.”)

“What is abstraction?” asks *Adbusters* publisher Kalle Lasn in his 2006 cinderblock of a book, *Design Anarchy*:

“The utopian realm of pure form
Universality of expression, of emotion, of thought
The hue of infinity
A glimpse into the spiritual structure of nature itself
The culmination of thousands of years
of human aesthetics

A fear of death
The loss of empathy
An escape from nature
A form of ecocide through wilful ignorance

The incestuous victory of the single-minded logic freak
The fatal flaw of Western civilization...”

All of the above, perhaps? Writing by the Yellow River in 1895, French philosopher Paul Valéry recorded an imaginary dialogue with an Eastern sage.

“You have neither the patience that weaves long lines nor a feeling for the irregular, nor a sense of the fittest place for a thing...For you intelligence is not one thing among many. You...worship it as if it were an omnipotent beast...You are in love with intelligence, until it frightens you. For your ideas are terrifying and your hearts are faint. Your acts of pity and cruelty are absurd, committed with no calm, as if they were irresistible. Finally, you fear blood more and more. Blood and time.”

If there can be said to be a global fundamentalist religion in today's world – and I think of fundamentalist religion as a body of superstitious beliefs safeguarded by emotional resistance – then it would be popular idea of science as the final guide to truth and progress.

Consider “big data” and its supposed promise of liberating human beings through numbers harvested from computers. The faithful believe that identifying previously unseen patterns in this Himalayan range of bytes will translate into greater health and prosperity for consumers, even while such quantification offers darker possibilities for the surveillance state.

I call it the ‘Temple of Abstraction.’ And as with all churches, membership has its privileges for those who have drunk the communion wine.

Consider, for example, the recent projections of the economic ‘worth’ of ecological services performed by the environment. Economists believe they can put a dollar number on watersheds, bogs, rivers and forests. The financial value of water filtration, pollination, the breakdown of vegetable matter into soil – pretty much anything nature does that benefits human beings – can be valued in millions to trillions of dollars, depending on the area and service examined.

These econometric studies might as well be elaborate jokes told by a drunken prof in a university pub. It’s the economy that is embedded in ecosystems, not the other way around. Such studies indicate how far we have become “isolated, separated, and detached” from the wilderness within and without.

On the charitable side, you could read this as progress of sorts, a retreat from interpreting nature as an easily ignorable “externality,” as defined by classical economists. Yet the ultimate value of the biosphere is literally incalculable – and this is without taking into consideration that other living creatures have the right to exist in and of themselves. The idea that the natural world might have a non-monetary value in which our needs are not factored is neither quantified nor quantifiable. It’s a concept

that lies outside of the hairless ape’s numeracy and parochial ethics.

The assumption that science is a value-free guide into a rational future is just as questionable, as author Derrick Jensen observed in his book *Dreams*:

“The notion that science makes no ethical or moral claims is absurd, I’m surprised otherwise intelligent people so often accept this. First, the *pre-*



Is it any surprise that the nations of the industrialized west are now populated with abstracted, isolated workers hooked on antidepressants and electronic distractions?

cepts of science – including the notion that universe is mechanistic, and including the emphasis placed on repeatability (which follows from and reinforces the notion that the universe is mechanistic, or not a wilful decision maker, or not filled with wilful decision-makers) – carry with them extraordinary moral weight, in that they lead to certain behaviours that

carry with them moral consequences.”

In ancient world views, the world is alive with “wilful subjects with whom you can enter into relationships,” the author notes. But regarding these subjects as objects – that is, resources, cogs in the cosmic machinery, or lumps on insensate matter – doesn’t just make a pattern of exploitation and collapse possible, but inevitable.

“It’s easier to kill a number than an individual, whether we’re talking about so many tons of fish, so many board feet of timber, or so many boxcars of *untermenschen*,” Jensen concludes.

Abstract thinking has brought immense technical blessings to human beings, extending our lifespans through medicine and sanitation, while pushing the biosphere to its limits. It has allowed our technocratic priesthood to build and destroy with greater skill and at greater scales. As British novelist Aldous Huxley once observed, “Applied science is a conjuror, whose bottomless hat yields impartially the softest of Angora rabbits and the most petrifying of Medusas.”

But expect no commissions of enquiry, no truth and reconciliation reports, on the darker side of our ability to name and number, to sow and reap, and to give or take life. The scripture of the ‘Temple of Abstraction’ is embedded in textbooks, newspapers, television news, annual company reports – and hidden in plain sight in our hearts and minds.

www.geoffolson.com

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to balance his first budget.

Even then it was done with money filched from the EI fund and pudding-headed stock sales. With the oil industry firing on two cylinders, Harper has worsened things by cutting government spending by exactly .2 percent in the 1Q. The great economist. Remember, this was the guy who said there was no recession back in 2008.

Nor can Harper market away the fact that his former parliamentary secretary, Dean del Mastro, was sentenced to jail for cheating in the 2008 election. "An affront to democracy" the judge observed - a fitting epitaph for the Harper years.

Before that happened and while Deano was under active investigation by Elections Canada, Harper made him the government's spokesperson for ethics and electoral matters during the Robocalls controversy. If the New England Patriots need a new ball-deflator, Deano could be their boy. Steve would surely give him a favourable reference, being so big on deflat-

ing balls himself - politically speaking.

Maybe the guy who said 'Peterborough, c'est moi' in his resignation speech thought cheating was okay. The Conservatives cheated in 2006 and 2008. Peter Penashue cheated. And someone cheated in 2011 using lists of non-supporters from the CPC's Constituent Information Management System, the party's computer system.

I wonder who that could have been? Perhaps the people who had information on "matters of some significance" who wouldn't talk to investigators from Elections Canada, according to Elections Commissioner Yves Cote.

And how many sailors have to jump ship before you call it a mutiny? Nearly three dozen non-offering MPs is a sizeable percentage of the whole crew. When you add in cabinet lunkers like John Baird, Peter MacKay, and James Moore, not to mention small fry like Christian Paradis and Shelley Glover, you have to start wondering about the captain. After all, these people are professional wind sniffers. They smell defeat.



Then you toss in the fact that social Conservative MPs have largely left the party, finally realizing that Steve's commitment to their cause was strategy not philosophy. He played them like fifty-cent fish. Like Napoleon, Steve is everyone man's woman and every woman's man in the world of Conservative politics. The question is, does he really believe in anything but information control, marketing, and bossing everyone around?

The terror thing is wearing pretty



And how will Stephen Harper market his way out of the revelations of the Mike Duffy trial? Will the public stand by and watch Duffy scapegoated while the Senate withholds evidence crucial to his defence?

thin too. The Harperites mention it six times a day in the House of Commons merely to scare all those people who would happily vote for the resurrected Joe McCarthy if he miraculously appeared on the scene. And the country is still waiting for this PM to provide the evidence for his bizarre claim that ISIS has "executed and is planning attacks against Canada and Canadians." As for his accusation that the criticizing the fight against ISIS is "irresponsible electoral politics", the last time Harper said something like that was when he was retailing whoppers about the cost of the F-35 stealth fighter jets during a federal election.

Justin Trudeau has it absolutely right on the war in Iraq. He is not soft on terror. His critics, including the painfully out of touch panel on the CBC's Power and Politics, are soft-headed. Wars on nouns are notoriously unwinnable. It should be dawning on people by now that when you stand a greater chance of being introduced to the wider life by a lightning strike or a bull moose on the highway. Since 9/11, nearly twice as many people have been killed by anti-government fanatics than jihadists, according to the New York Times. ISIS is what you

I am a conservative, I conserve

Then and now: Robert Bateman wrote the article, I am a conservative, I conserve, in 2003. As Canadians get ready to head to the polls on October 19, his warnings about the Conservative government are as relevant today as they were then.

I am a conservative. This is why I deeply resent the neo-conservatives who are not conservatives at all. They are the opposite: radicals who are destroying cherished institutions and wreaking havoc on our human heritage as well as our natural heritage.

I do not consider destroyers to be conservative. So many cherished institutions have been built with great care and dedication through the decades by well-trained people with good hearts. These are being smashed and weakened in great haste by politicians and ideologues who do not even understand what they destroy. Creation is long and difficult; destruction is quick.

Institutions such as railways, medicare, electrical power production and delivery, environmental protection, social services, schools and many other government agencies are being attacked, weakened and even privatized. These aspects of society are useful and helpful and are there for the common good. Their destruction is done with the aim of cutting taxes and reducing government. Yet many thinkers, such as Lord Richard Layard, professor emeritus at the London School of Economics, argue that taxation is a good thing for creating a state of balance between work and life.

Neo-conservatives seem to care more about the individual than the common good; the cult of the individual has grown into an ideology. Now we are faced with the foolish idea that a corporation should be regarded legally as “a person.” In reality, a corporation is simply a pile of money to which a number of persons have sold their moral allegiance. The slogan of most of these entities is “make too cheap and sell too high.” With few exceptions, there is little obligation among such corporate “persons” to ideas of public place or public good. In *the Presence of Fear, Three Essays For a Changed World*, is excellent book written after 9/11, Wendell Berry observes, “Corporations make the assumption that stable and preserving relationships among people, places and things do not matter and are of no worth.” And “that there is no conflict between self-interest and public service.” This seems to be the philosophy of the neo-conservatives.

True conservatives should believe in, and practise, conservation. One would expect them to act as good stewards to preserve and protect the natural world. Perhaps the most striking and alarming aspects of neo-conservatives are not only their neglect of stewardship but their vigorous attacks on protection and preservation. They seem to regard natural scientists as enemies whose work should be ignored and whose careers should be eliminated. Their desire to be rid of regulations and regulators puts them more in line with anarchists than true conservatives.

It seems to me, as a conservative, that the family and family values would be worth preserving. A couple of decades ago then US vice-president Dan Quayle was decrying the decline of family values in America. I agreed with him about the decline; I thought his critique applied to Canada as well.

Mr. Quayle and the other neo-conservatives blamed overly permissive liberal ideas. There may be some truth to this. But, to me, the main blame falls in the lap of profit-seekers who portion up human society into age-based market targets. Their advertis-

ing programs divide and conquer the minds of children and teenagers using greed, envy, lust and fascination with violence to sell products. Family values too often come from the television set rather than the actual and extended family. Merchants of Cool design youth to be alienated. If you preach salvation through shopping instead of salvation through service, the sense of community is weakened and even destroyed.

Yet, neo-conservatives seem to have no problem with this state of affairs. They claim one can't interfere with the freedom to make profit. This has also lead to the disruption and even destruction of meaningful work.

In his 1973 bestseller, *Small is Beautiful*, the German-born British economist E.F. Schumacher wrote, “Next to the family, work and the relationships established by work [are] the true foundation of society. If these foundations are unsound, how can society be sound?”

Subsidized, industrial farming has decimated family farms and rural communities. Subsidized, industrial fishing has closed down entire fishing communities and brought many fish stocks to the brink of extinction. Subsidized, industrial forestry has ruined many small logging communities. And these three industrial “Fs” have devastated wild nature at every turn.

The horrible irony is much of this destruction of human communities and natural ecosystems has been paid for by taxpayers – you and me. Neo-conservatives never seem to complain about our taxes being wasted in this manner, though they do whine about taxes going to help social programs and a civil society. The cost of corporate welfare amounts to many times that of social welfare. It is not a question of fiscal responsibility; it is a question of ideology.

Media analyst Marshall McLuhan spoke of how the technological revolution of recent decades has produced a maelstrom of bewildering forces that are neither completely understandable nor predictable, but bring with them stress, depression, addiction and other negative side effects. A true conservative would strive to alleviate these problems; the neo-conservatives seem to encourage the maelstrom to become bigger and even faster.

In recent elections, I've heard only one main message from all the major parties, whether they called themselves Liberal or Conservative or Alliance, or in America, Democrat or Republican. The message is, “Vote for me, I will cut your taxes and put more money in your own pocket.” Then the implication is, “You can go to the mall and buy more stuff.” In other words, we will achieve salvation through shopping or salvation through selfishness. We no longer hear messages such as the one John F. Kennedy gave at his inauguration: “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”

Of course, everyone wants lower taxes; we all have a natural sense of selfishness and greed. But taxes are the price we pay for civilization. If you do not like government and taxes, try Somalia. In fact, I am at a loss to distinguish between the philosophy of the BC Liberal Party and the Fraser Institute on the one hand and the American Republican party on the other. I'm not the first to argue that neo-conservatives should call themselves neo-Republicans.

Although I am a conservative, I do not claim that being a conservative is virtuous. My point is that those who are in favour of rapid change and destruction of institutions can in no way be called conservative. ☒

call a manufactured threat. It is marketing to scare you into perpetuating a government that lives on fear and deception.

The surest sign that Steve the marketing fear-merchant is losing his touch is what just happened in the Senate. The Conservative-controlled Upper Chamber actually passed a piece of legislation that will erode some of the undemocratic powers that all party leaders have assumed, and which Harper has wantonly abused. There will be no more kangaroo courts run out of the PMO - and no more victims of this man's political malevolence like Helena Guergis and Bill Casey.

And how will Stephen Harper market his way out of the revelations of the Mike Duffy trial? Will the public stand by and watch Duffy scapegoated while the Senate withholds evidence crucial to his defence? Did the Senate claim parliamentary privilege for its own internal audit into residency issues because that audit shows that if Duffy is guilty of anything it may be “an officially induced error” - legalese for doing what he was told was okay by Senate staff? Like a lot of other senators did?

Will the trial reveal that Mike Duffy and Pamela Wallin were not at the heart of the residency scandal at all, but the PM himself? Well placed sources say that both Duffy and Wallin asked to be appointed from Ontario and that it was Harper himself who insisted they take their appointments from PEI and Saskatchewan respectively.

Not only did Wright tell the RCMP that Duffy was likely entitled to his living expenses under existing Senate rules, but there are also 880 emails between Duffy's then lawyer Janice Payne, the Senate leadership and senior staff in the PMO about the deal.

Those emails show clearly that the genesis of the repayment scenario was PMO-driven and known at the highest levels of the office - contrary to Steve's confabulations. That means there will be no closet dark enough to hide the prime minister. In what will surely be Canada's Rubicon election, not even the Merchant of Marketing can fool all of the people all of the time. ☐

War is a Racket

Part 2: Who makes the profits?

by Major General Smedley Butler
1881 – 1940



Major General Butler

The World War – rather our brief participation in it – has cost the United States some \$52,000,000,000. Figure it out. That means \$400 to every American man, woman and child. And we haven't paid the debt yet. We are paying it, our children will pay it and our children's children probably still will be paying the cost of that war.

The normal profits of a business concern in the United States are six, eight, 10 and sometimes 12%. But wartime profits – ah! that is another matter – 20, 60, 100, 300, and even 1,800%, the sky is the limit. All that traffic will bear. Uncle Sam has the money. Let's get it.

Of course, it isn't put that crudely in wartime. It is dressed into speeches about patriotism, love of country and "We must all put our shoulders to the wheel," but the profits jump and leap and skyrocket – and are safely pocketed. Let's just take a few examples:

Take our friends the du Ponts, the powder people – didn't one of them testify before a Senate committee recently that their powder won the war? Or saved the world for democracy? Or something? How did they do in the war? They were a patriotic corporation. Well, the average earnings of the du Ponts for the period 1910 to 1914 were \$6,000,000 a year. It wasn't much, but

the du Ponts managed to get along on it. Now let's look at their average yearly profit during the war years, 1914 to 1918. Fifty-eight million dollars a year profit we find! Nearly 10 times that of normal times and the profits of normal times were pretty good. An increase in profits of more than 950%.

Take one of our little steel companies that patriotically shunted aside the making of rails and girders and bridges to manufacture war materials. Well, their 1910-1914 yearly earnings averaged \$6,000,000. Then came the war. And, like loyal citizens, Bethlehem Steel promptly turned to munitions making. Did their profits jump or did they let Uncle Sam in for a bargain? Well, their 1914-1918 average was \$49,000,000 a year!

Or let's take United States Steel. The normal earnings during the five-year period prior to the war were \$105,000,000 a year. Not bad. Then along came the war and up went the profits. The average yearly profit for the period 1914-1918 was \$240,000,000. Not bad.

There you have some of the steel and powder earnings. Let's look at something else. A little copper, perhaps. That always does well in war times.

Anaconda, for instance. Average yearly earnings during the pre-war years 1910-1914 of \$10,000,000. During the war years 1914-1918, profits leaped to \$34,000,000 per year.

Or Utah Copper. Average of \$5,000,000 per year during the 1910-1914 period. Jumped to an average of \$21,000,000 yearly profits for the war period.

Let's group these five, with three smaller companies. The total yearly average profits of the pre-war period 1910-1914 were \$137,480,000. Then along came the war. The average yearly profits for this group skyrocketed to \$408,300,000.

A little increase in profits of approximately 200%.

Does war pay? It paid them. But they aren't the only ones. There are still others. Let's take leather.

For the three-year period before the war, the total profits of Central Leather Company were \$3,500,000. That was approximately \$1,167,000 a year. Well, in 1916, Central Leather returned a profit of \$15,000,000, a small increase of 1,100%. That's all. The General Chemical Com-

pany averaged a profit for the three years before the war of a little over \$800,000 a year. Came the war and the profits jumped to \$12,000,000. A leap of 1,400%.

International Nickel Company – and you can't have a war without nickel – showed an increase in profits from a mere average of \$4,000,000 a year to \$73,000,000 yearly. Not bad? An increase of more than 1,700%.

American Sugar Refining Company averaged \$2,000,000 a year for the three years before the war. In 1916, a profit of \$6,000,000 was recorded.

Listen to Senate Document No. 259. The Sixty-Fifth Congress, reporting on corporate earnings and government revenues. Considering the profits of 122 meat packers, 153 cotton manufacturers, 299 garment makers, 49 steel plants, and 340 coal producers during the war. Profits under 25% were exceptional. For instance, the coal companies made between 100% and 7,856% on their capital stock during the war. The Chicago packers doubled and tripled their earnings.

And let us not forget the bankers who financed the great war. If anyone had the cream of the profits, it was the bankers. Being partnerships rather than incorporated organizations, they do not have to report to stockholders. And their profits were as secret as they were immense. How the bankers made their millions and their billions I do not know because those little secrets never become public – even before a Senate investigatory body.

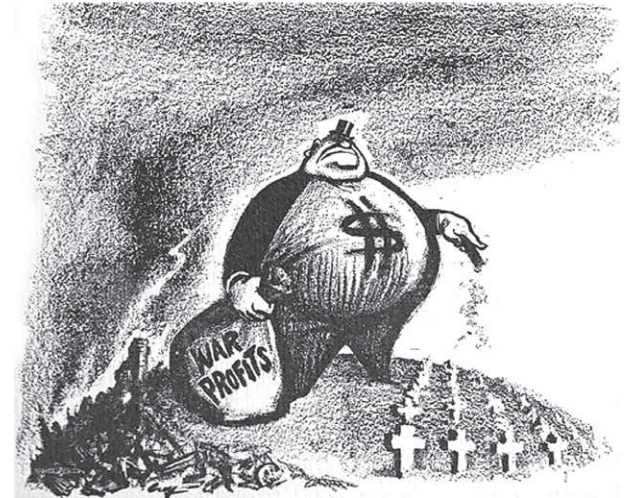
But here's how some of the other patriotic industrialists and speculators chiselled their way into war profits.

Take the shoe people. They like war. It brings business with abnormal profits. They made huge profits on sales abroad to our allies. Perhaps, like the munitions manufacturers and armament makers, they also sold to the enemy. For a dollar is a dollar whether

it comes from Germany or from France. But they did well by Uncle Sam too. For instance, they sold Uncle Sam 35,000,000 pairs of hobnailed service shoes. There were 4,000,000 soldiers. Eight pairs, and more, to a soldier. My regiment during the war had only one pair to a soldier. Some of these shoes probably are still in existence. They were good shoes. But when the war was over, Uncle Sam has a matter of 25,000,000 pairs left over. Bought and paid for. Profits recorded and pocketed.

There was still lots of leather left. So the leather people sold your Uncle Sam

THE ONLY VICTOR



Cartoon by Laura Gray, 1945

hundreds of thousands of McClellan saddles for the cavalry. But there wasn't any American cavalry overseas! Somebody had to get rid of this leather, however. Somebody had to make a profit in it so we had a lot of McClellan saddles. And we probably have those yet.

Also somebody had a lot of mosquito netting. They sold your Uncle Sam 20,000,000 mosquito nets for the use of the soldiers overseas. I suppose the boys were expected to put it over them as they tried to sleep in muddy trenches – one hand scratching cooties on their backs and the other making passes at scurrying rats. Well, not one of these mosquito nets ever got to France!

Anyhow, these thoughtful manufacturers wanted to make sure that no soldier would be without his mosquito net so 40,000,000 additional yards of mosquito netting were sold to Uncle Sam.

There were pretty good profits in mosquito netting in those days even if there were no mosquitoes in France. I suppose, if the war had lasted just a little longer, the enterprising mosquito netting manufacturers would have sold your Uncle Sam a couple of consignments of mosquitoes to plant in France so that more mosquito netting would be in order.

Airplane and engine manufacturers felt they, too, should get their just profits out of this war. Why not? Everybody else was getting theirs. So \$1,000,000,000 – count them if you live long enough – was spent by Uncle Sam in building airplane engines that never left the ground! Not one plane or motor out of the billion dollars' worth ordered ever got into a battle in France. Just the same the manufacturers made their little profit of 30, 100, or perhaps 300%.

Undershirts for soldiers cost 14¢ to make and Uncle Sam paid 30¢ to 40¢ each for them – a nice little profit for the undershirt manufacturer. And the stocking manufacturer and the uniform manufacturers and the cap manufacturers and the steel helmet manufacturers – all got theirs.

Why, when the war was over, some 4,000,000 sets of equipment – knapsacks and the things that go to fill them – crammed warehouses on this side. Now they are being scrapped because the regulations have changed the contents. But the manufacturers collected their wartime profits on them – and they

will do it all over again the next time.

There were lots of brilliant ideas for profit making during the war.



If anyone had the cream
of the profits, it was the
bankers. How the bankers
made their millions and
their billions I do not
know because those little
secrets never become
public – even before a
Senate investigatory body.

One very versatile patriot sold Uncle Sam twelve dozen 48-inch wrenches. Oh, they were very nice wrenches. The only trouble was that there was only one nut ever made that was large enough for these wrenches. That is the one that holds the turbines at Niagara Falls. Well, after Uncle Sam had bought them and the manufacturer had pocketed the profit, the wrenches were put on freight cars and shunted all around the United States in an effort to find a use for them. When the

Armistice was signed, it was indeed a sad blow to the wrench manufacturer. He was just about to make some nuts to fit the wrenches. Then he planned to sell these, too, to your Uncle Sam.

Still another had the brilliant idea that colonels shouldn't ride in automobiles, nor should they even ride on horseback. One has probably seen a picture of Andy Jackson riding in a buckboard. Well, some 6,000 buckboards were sold to Uncle Sam for the use of colonels! Not one of them was used. But the buckboard manufacturer got his war profit.

The shipbuilders felt they should come in on some of it, too. They built a lot of ships that made a lot of profit. More than \$3,000,000,000 worth. Some of the ships were all right. But \$635,000,000 worth of them were made of wood and wouldn't float! The seams opened up and they sank. We paid for them, though. And somebody pocketed the profits.

It has been estimated by statisticians and economists and researchers that the war cost your Uncle Sam \$52,000,000,000. Of this sum, \$39,000,000,000 was expended in the actual war itself. This expenditure yielded \$16,000,000,000 in profits. That is how the 21,000 billionaires and millionaires got that way. This \$16,000,000,000 profits is not to be sneezed at. It is quite a tidy sum. And it went to a very few.

The Senate (Nye) committee probe of the munitions industry and its wartime

profits, despite its sensational disclosures, hardly has scratched the surface.

Even so, it has had some effect. The State Department has been studying "for some time" methods of keeping out of war. The War Department suddenly decides it has a wonderful plan to spring. The Administration names a committee – with the War and Navy Departments ably represented under the chairmanship of a Wall Street speculator – to limit profits in wartime. To what extent isn't suggested. Hmmm. Possibly the profits of 300 and 600 and 1,600% of those who turned blood into gold in the World War would be limited to some smaller figure.

Apparently, however, the plan does not call for any limitation of losses – that is, the losses of those who fight the war. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there is nothing in the scheme to limit a soldier to the loss of but one eye, or one arm, or to limit his wounds to one or two or three. Or to limit the loss of life.

There is nothing in this scheme, apparently, that says not more than 12% of a regiment shall be wounded in battle, or that not more than 7% in a division shall be killed.

Of course, the committee cannot be bothered with such trifling matters. ■

Excerpted from **War Is a Racket**, by United States Marine Corps Major General and two-time Medal of Honor recipient **Smedley D. Butler**.

THE DROP WHY YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T VOTE

In the last Canadian federal election, only 36% of young people came out to vote compared to nearly 70% of eligible voters over the age of 30. **The Drop: Why Young People Don't Vote** is an hour-long documentary investigating why young people don't vote.

Millennial filmmakers Dylan Playfair and Kyle McCachen travel to Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto, Raleigh (North Carolina) and Ferguson (Missouri) to find out why their generation doesn't vote. **The Drop** premieres in Ontario on **TVO, Monday, October 5, at 9 p.m. ET** followed by a national simulcast on **CPAC and TVO on Sunday, October 11 at 11 p.m. ET/8 p.m. PT**. For more information, go to www.kensingtontv.com/thedrop.



Phase out fossil fuels & plug into a healthy green economy



Image © Loulig

Emerging from all the interruptions and arguments in the federal election debates is the environment – finally included in our national leaders’ discussions and speeches about the economy. Justin Trudeau’s federal government won’t impose a carbon-pricing policy on provinces. Tom Mulcair plans a national cap-and-trade strategy. Stephen Harper claims greenhouse gas emissions are down while the economy grew. And Elizabeth May is forced to tweet fact-based ideas and innovative strategy.

Finally. We agree that climate change is real. It’s here – caused by carbon emissions from the fossil fuels our ‘leaders’ want to expand – and it threatens life on the planet.

Canadians are justifiably worried. There are reports that one-third of us now live pay cheque to pay cheque and one-fifth of us hold down two jobs to make ends meet. We’re also confused about the issue that most Canadians consider most critical: jobs and the economy. And we’re misinformed about the importance of fossil fuels in our future. Clean technology – the fastest-growing sector in Canada – remains a very minor talking point, with few details about forging a new, renewable path for the country.

Eco-futurist and author Guy Dauncey is the first to have actually crunched some important numbers and asked questions. The first concerns the veracity of what we are told by Conservatives and several provincial governments: if we don’t build more pipelines and export more coal, oil and gas, Canada’s economy will be endangered.

Not true, according to Dauncey’s new 48-page report, “Almost Twice as Many Green Jobs if Canada Phases out Fossil Fuels.” In fact – backed by 100 referenced sources – it is quite the contrary: “If Canada was to undertake a planned 25-year transition to renewable energy, it would generate almost twice as many new green jobs as the number of fossil fuel jobs that would disappear. By the end of the transition, there would be as many new, permanent green jobs as there are jobs in fossil fuels today.”

He reports that Denmark – the world’s happiest country – hopes to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050. Hawaii may get there a decade earlier. In the G-7, Britain, Germany, France, Italy and the US are signing on to a call for decarbonization by the end of the century. Only Canada and Japan have said “No!”

Dauncey also clarifies some made-in-Canada misconceptions: only 4% of Canada’s workers depend on fossil fuels for their income while 96% of Canadians work in other job sectors. And our economy comprises 19 million jobs yet fossil fuels only support 550,000 direct and indirect jobs and 245,000 induced jobs for an approximate total of 850,000.

So where will new green jobs originate? Most

will be generated in four sectors: electricity, buildings, transportation and farming.

Expansion of wind, solar, geothermal and other forms of renewable energy to generate electricity will support 127,000 direct and indirect jobs and 90,000 induced jobs. Retrofitting buildings and phasing out oil and gas in favour of heat pumps, etc., will support 93,000 direct and indirect jobs and 31,000 induced jobs. Based on Europe’s experience, a cross-Canada network of safe, separated bike lanes will create 5,000 new jobs annually – largely in cycle tourism – growing to 125,000 jobs by the end of the transition. Expanding transit and LRT would generate



Finally. We agree that climate change is real. It’s here – caused by carbon emissions from the fossil fuels our ‘leaders’ want to expand – and it threatens life on the planet.

37,000 jobs a year from the capital expenditure and 18,500 job operations and maintenance jobs at the start, rising to 462,500 jobs. Electrifying railways would add 14,000 direct and indirect jobs a year, plus 6,000 induced jobs. Switching to organic farming – which supports 32% more workers – away from conventional dependence on fertilizer grows 4,000 new permanent jobs a year, rising to 100,000 jobs by the end of the 25-year transition. His total of 876,000 new permanent green jobs compares very favourably to lost employment in fossil fuels.

Dauncey notes that building retrofit and renewable energy installation jobs would eventually cease, but cycling, farming and transit operating work would continue. The cycle and ripple effects of infrastructure renewal would begin for solar, wind and geothermal, railway installations and other initiatives.

In an interview with *Common Ground*, Dauncey pointed to the stumbling blocks: current Conservative policy and the need to reform our first-past-the-post electoral process. “Elections are much more than just contests,” he said. “The climate crisis is imperative and loyalty to the planet is more important than loyalty to a party.”

Read and download the full report at <https://guydauncey.wordpress.com> and browse Guy Dauncey for more information and ongoing projects.



Brigette DePape



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